Vol 3 No 12 December 1986 $3*

The Australian COMMODORE REVIEW

Electric Dreams

Reviews:
Paperclip II
Superscript R8

Games:
Iridis Alpha
Alleykat
Boulder Dash

SPECIAL:
Mercenary II
complete maps
and review

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Editorial

Andrew Farrell

Amiga is without a doubt an astonishing machine, yet despite all the sock-removing things you read about and see the machine doing, the Amiga is still having problems gaining the following that it truly deserves. In the US sales have diminished to a trickle, yet hard core enthusiasts are having a ball putting the unit to work at some off beat ideas.

The business community in Australia still shows some resistance towards the machine - but that is improving. Despite all this, Commodore dealers are selling as many units as they can get their hands on. But worry not for there is something big in store.

A vastly improved version of the machine is due to arrive within the next three to six months.

As it stands now, Amiga has some very advanced features, however none of these can surpass the practicality of IBM compatibility.

Sidecar is now readily available in Australia, which alleviates this problem to an extent. But Sidecar is an expensive add-on and one which takes away from the compact feel of the original machine.

Amiga has also been criticised for its slowness during some operations.

Well, Commodore has listened, and in their wisdom taken heed.

At this stage it should be clearly stated that the vast majority of what I am about to tell you is hearsay, and the actual finished machine may vary greatly from the early prototype specifications on which our comments are based.

The new version may have Sidecar built in, boast more RAM, operate at a higher speed and also include a few minor cosmetic improvements. It will be priced in such a way as to be very competitive with equally endowed machines.

Of particular importance to the business community, the Amiga will now have the option of an on board hard disk. There will be a variety to choose from, the top of the range having a capacity of extraordinary size. We wait in earnest to hear more about this new machine.

Commodore expect to have a Beta-version early in the new year, that will be subject to their approval. Following the go-ahead signal from the decision makers, we will have to wait at least another two months before seeing production models arriving in Australia.

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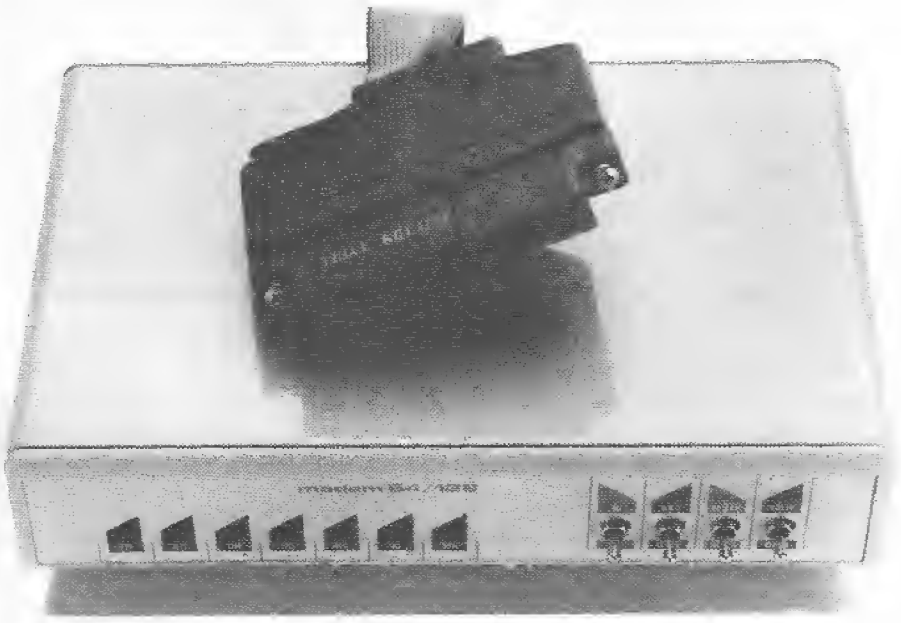
RAM RUMBLINGS

NetComm releases New Modem for Commodore range



Commodore 64 and 128 owners have the opportunity to celebrate Christmas with a new auto dial/auto answer modem designed and manufactured locally by NetComm Australia.

According to NetComm marketing manager Bruce Reid, the new product fills a long-standing requirement for advanced communications facilities on the popular Commodore personal computers, at a price compatible with the original cost of the Commodore hardware.

Telecom approved, and priced at less than $300 exluding tax, the Modem 64/128 provides auto dial, auto answer and auto disconnect features for operation at 300bps, and 1200/75bps for Viatel communications. NetComm-developed videotex and standard ASCII teletype communications software is bundled with the modem at no additional cost.

The software supports auto log-on, printing, disk-saving and file transfer with and without protocols. The modem is compatible with the USA Commodore 1650 modem and with existing Commodore software. All operating features are subject to manual and/or software control, including a seven LED display and an internal speaker for monitoring call progress.

For futher information: Bruce Reid, NetComm - (02) 888 5533.

LOTTO

Computer games fall into two broad categories. There is the Shoot-em-Dead game which requires a good hand/eye co-ordination and some brute force or cunning. The other is the strategy game where the player has to outthink the game.

In this second type the winning player is frequently one with a good imagination and the flair for seeing the unusual. Sometimes there is a certain needle in a haystack tenacity needed. Winning these games requires more personal input. Your insight, your intuition, your attitude provide vital elements towards winning the game. Up to now the sad part about winning had been that your reward had been only electronic congratulations, and the satisfaction of winning.

Here is the ultimate game. It has been with us for years but your chances have been limited by lack of having it available on your computer. Now that Database Support has made Lotto Numbers available for much less than the cost of the average game you can exercise your flair for the unusual, your intuition and all the skills that go towards winning. The reward, over $1.5 million.

The programming skill needed to search for the combinations that your intuition says are there, is very basic. BASIC. Programming your computer to find the numbers is not the difficult part. The skilful part is divining what to look for. This is where the same skills that are required to play strategy games come into play.

Lotto games have been running long enough now for consistent patterns of numbers to show predictable behaviour. Being able to spot those patterns and the way they will jump next, like strategy games, requires more intuition and inspiration than experience or mathematical ability.

If you are not confident of your programming skills you can always use the Database Support offer of limited assistance. This is limited to some sample programs with explanations and liaison with other computerized Lotto players. However the rewards of winning should provide adequate motivation to master the elementary programming required.

Some advantages this game has over all others are: your degree of proficiency is measurable in dollars, you will never become bored with it having once played it through to its conclusion, and for some reason everyone with a system seems to want to share it with you. That means that there's a whole world full of other people's brains to pick.

Now that the information and the support for players is available, this game could prove to be popular.

Personality and Practicality, the Compu-controller

From the silver screen of electric dreams, where hybrid computers rule the airwaves, to the early morning glow from the picture of an earthy Commodore 64, comes a concept that could change your life. ***Andrew Farrell*** *expands further.*

Home computing is all about computing at home, and yet truly practical uses for such a machine are as rare as a dog in the desert. That is until now. What I am about to describe is really only scratching the surface of an entirely new slant on the words home computing. The device itself is a simple concept - but the uses to which it can be put are wide and varied - limited, as the old saying goes, omly by your imagination.

In simple terms, the Compu-Controller is another of those mystic black boxes that you see between familiar objects. They allow the two more familiar items to work together. This particular box allows you to connect 240v household appliances to your computer, in order that the computer may control switching them off and on. There's nothing overly complex in the idea itself - the majority of the problems are associated more with production of the device, and the legal wrangles of gaining electrical approval.

Coupled with a voice recognition device, the potential is absolutely fascinating. With further development of the idea the following scenario would be easily and inexpensively possible.

Scenario

Imagine being able to drive up to your home and at the press of a button not only does the garage door open but the porch light switches on and the dripolator starts to make coffee.

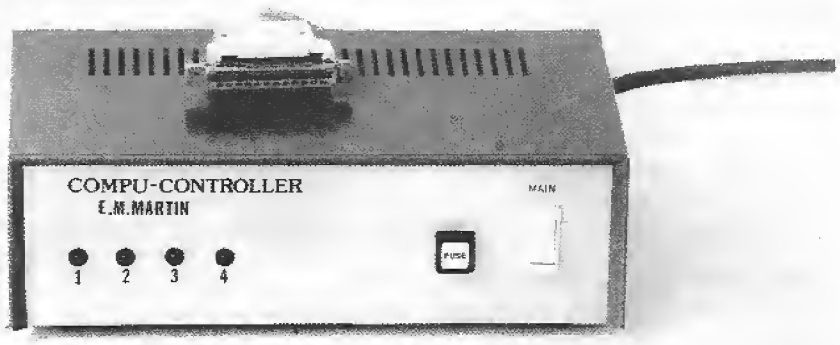
As you near the front door a miniature transmitter is sensed on your belt and the front door automatically unlocks. Later on in the night you awaken with a pressing need to visit the loo. Half asleep as you stumble up the hallway, motion detectors sense your presence and switch on the hall light and then the bathroom light.

When you left home earlier, the iron was accidentally left on. The same motion detectors soon detected that no one was in the house and subsequently turned off the iron.

The list of possible uses goes on. At the moment it is far more limited than what I have just described. You'll need a lot of extension cords to wire up the whole house, using the current version. However a radio controlled adaption of the idea is already at the prototype stage.

By now anyone who has seen the movie Electric Dreams will recognise further uses for this contraption.

"... a radio controlled adaption of the idea is already at the prototype stage ..."



A simple but practical housing - complete with press release fuse, power switch and indicator LEDS

Test Run

Fascinated by the idea of having such a device at home, it was with much excitement that I took hold of the test unit as it arrived through our office doors.

As most of our Commodores are busy handling more pressing tasks than switching on coffee percolators, an old Vic 20 was called upon to act as the nerve centre. After dusting off the keyboard, I soon discovered that whilst the Compu-controller connects quite happily to a Vic, you will need to use a different set of POKES to activate the device.

My immediate thoughts were focused on the convenience of awakening to find hot coffee, toast and gentle music lulling me into a more conscious existence.

It was no great trauma to build a short BASIC program that allowed each device to be named, and a timed switch on/off sequence be set for each. Having satisfied myself that everything would work, I cleared away a corner of the kitchen, and set everything up.

One of the devices connected was the screen. In this way the computer could turn the screen off at night and back on in the morning in time to play a wake up tune and display a cute animation sequence from my repertoire of stick figure manoeuvres.

Next up was the dripolator, filled with water and ready to fire. This would be the first item switched on as it would take the longest to operate.

Departing from my normal diet of Weet-Bix topped with honey, sultanas and warm milk, I opted for a light start of hot toast and so the toaster entered the collection of objects now starting to clutter the bench space.

One socket is still spare - there must be something else? How about a bedside light? I ran an extension cord to the foot of my bed, and placed a carefully directed desk lamp on the bed end. I find that there's nothing quite so annoying as having the light turned on when you are trying to sleep. This should therefore be the ideal wake up stimulus.

That night ...

With everything set, I hit the deck at around 10.30pm. Fifteen minutes later the computer screen switched off - all was well. I adjusted the lamp one more time, for maximum effectiveness and then drifted off into a daze . . .

Click, it's 6.45am, the light's on, and I just have to get up to at least switch off that blinding glare. My coffee and toast . . . why yes, I might just get up for them, too.

In the kitchen, the screen welcomed me to another day. A gentle column of steam twisted its way toward the ceiling from the freshly brewed coffee. The toast was up, but I hadn't adjusted the timing too well and there would be some need of further applied heat before the bread reached that golden tan colour.

Conclusions

It all works, and that is the main thing. The Compu-controller is just a touch of what the idea of remote controlled households is all about.

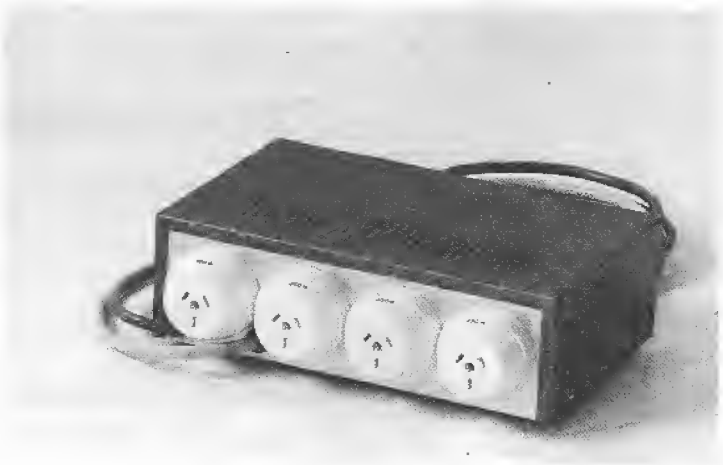
The unit itself is of solid construction, and complies with all the usual electrical standards that must be adhered to. All the cables have double strain relief, and insulation.

Initial production runs will arrive in a rather bland steel casing, with an equally unattractive front panel. Yet, it is a very practical design - a fine starting point to bigger and better things.

As Ted Martin, the electrical whizz-cum-programmer of this wondrous device, pointed out, the applications available are limitless. It is a simple matter to add sensing devices to the joyport in order to provide input for an

" ...the applications available are limitless ..."

Four outlets provide 450W power each



alarm system, or even total household management.

As it stands the unit could be used as a party light controller, burglar deterrent or even for the convenience of a ready made breakfast as described. Connect up a Voice Master (voice recognition unit) and you may operate the entire setup remotely by walkie-talkie or telephone.

The mind boggles.

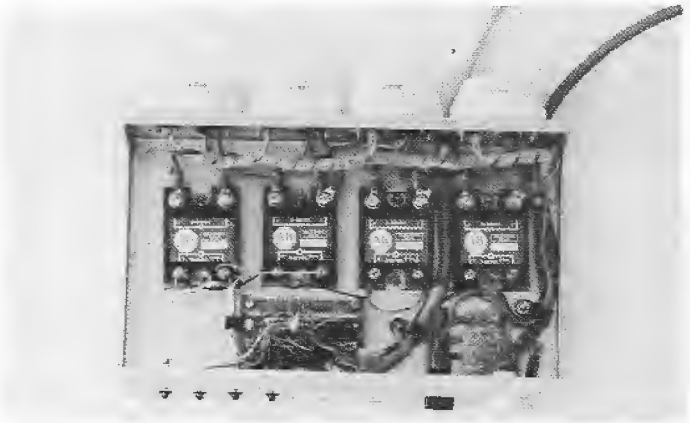
Designers such as Ted Martin are indeed worthy of praise. Anyone who has the enthusiasm and know-how to make an idea such as this into a reality must be spurred on to greater things. I'm sure that we will continue to provide every support possible, and that our readers will do likewise.

Full points, guys, keep up the good work. I'm only sorry that you wanted our test unit back - I was just getting use to the idea.

Documentation included was ample, describing in both technical and non-technical terms how the unit functions. There is a full explanation of how to write your own software, which revolves around one memory location to toggle the various ports off and on.

For those who are not budding software designers as yet, software is provided. The version that I originally received was updated three times during one week. It now includes some very smart features that would enable you to do most of the things I did in my little experiment.

At around the $400 mark, its not a cheap investment - however, for the potential practical value it's good value



Solid high standard construction - note that the PC board is only a prototype at this stage

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A RESET switch is fitted. (We have found this to be "unstoppable" - it even preserves the tape buffer).

NO MEMORY IS USED by this cartridge. It is totally "transparent" and uses special switching techniques.

"128" and 1570 compatible in '64 mode.

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NOW HANDLES PROGRAMS THAT LOAD SUBSEQUENT PARTS

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- COMPLETELY SELF CONTAINED. NO EXTRA SOFTWARE NEEDED
- FILES COMPRESSED FOR ECONOMY OF STORAGE SPACE
- 128/128D COMPATIBLE IN 64 MODE
- TAPE TO TAPE
- DISC TO TAPE
- RELOAD INDEPENDENT OF THE CARTRIDGE
- NOW HANDLES PROGRAMS THAT LOAD EXTRA PARTS
- PROGRAMS RESTART FROM THE POINT BUTTON IS PRESSED

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"Freeze Frame" is **simplicity itself** to use. It is cartridge based so is simply plugged into the cartridge port. When the computer is switched on a message is displayed pressing "RETURN" will clear the computer back to the normal start up screen. Software can now be loaded from tape or disc **completely as normal.** The latest version of "Freeze Frame" will, to the best of our knowledge, allow **ANY software** to load and run normally (unlike competitive products).

"Freeze Frame" can be brought into operation at any convenient point by **pressing the button** on it. You can then do one of three things :-

1. **Pressing "D" will save a working version of the program in memory to a formatted disc. This version will include an auto booting very high speed reload (many programs reload in less than 30 secs).**
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AND THEN THERE WAS

DOLPHIN DOS

THE DIFFERENCE IS *STAGGERING*

Like everyone that has had the pleasure of seeing this system in operation you will be amazed by both the speed and ease of use. It is compatible with the majority of commercial software, speeding up both the program loading and SEQ/REL files. Fitting requires the insertion of two sub assembly boards, one in the 1541 and one in the '64/'128. This does not normally entail soldering, although a small amount will be necessary with some machines.

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Technical Application Notes

Some practical tried and tested applications for the Compu-Controller, elaborated on by the units designer, Ted Martin.

By writing a random number program I found that the unit could switch on lights around a vacated home at night. Combined with a LDR (Light Dependent Resistor) strategically wired into the computers joystick port, the computer was able to indentify ambient lighting conditions and to sense when the lights should be switched off

All applications have been tested with Commodore computers which have a user-port with TTL levels presented to the attached device. However with any commercially available RS232 to TTL converter units the Compu-Controller can be operated from many other types of computers inc. IBM.

From the degree of success with the adaptability of the Compu-Controller I decided to investigate further applications of this unit. The main application was to develop a series of modules and sensors as to allow for even greater versatility.

Amongst these I can produce a self contained module to allow the Compu-Controller to be interfaced with a standard house alarm system. The objective here was to use the infra-red movement detectors as the sensors to activate lights in various rooms in a house. This could then be set in a number of configurations. One configuration would be for the unit to switch on a light in a room upon detecting movement. Another application of the unit could be to monitor power consumption of appliances and to ensure that they are used economically. A recommended set-up would utilize both a computer and a control adaption module to achieve optimum results.

An interesting combination of devices which were used to control the Compu-Controller were a Commodore-64 home computer and a voice-recognition module to suit. These were adapted easily and demonstrated yet another application, speech-control. I achieved this by writing a small utility program which was combined with the supplied master program. One program (the master program) was the machine coded portion which defined parameters for voice-recognition which I arranged to interact with a program which I wrote in basic which defined the functions to address the poke locations required to operate the Compu-Controller when the correct speech sequence was achieved. This application might assist the handicapped who are limited in body movement in operating lights, fans, TVs, radios etc...

Although I have covered a number of applications thus far there is yet another that comes to mind. Many people such as myself who are computer buffs are consistantly troubled by having to switch on an endless number of switches at the back of monitors, disk drives, printers, modems etc. Well, now with the aid of a Compu-Controller the user can now load a program which will automatically switch on (and in the correct sequence) all the hardware. So once again the Compu-Controller can be utillized to make life a little easier.

As for the Compu-Controller physical characteristics, well this too is subject to the application. For the initial production run the controller is to be housed in a metallic casing. At the rear will be located four surface mount mains sockets. In addition to this a single mains flex lead which supplies the mains input. The other lead is a 10 core flex data cable which connects to either a computer's user port or suitable adaptor unit or control module. The front panel comprises of a single main isolation switch, a fuse holder and an array of light emitting diodes which indicate the control status.

In concluding I will say that the Compu-Controller will be available in a host of different versions. These would include a radio-controlled unit, a wall mount panel, individual outlet plug-in packs and built into homes during construction.

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PAPERCLIP II

- Professional Wordprocessing on the Commodore 128

Budding wordprocessor connoisseur, ***Phil Campbell,*** *takes the reins of yet another offering. Aptly named after its predecessor,* ***Paperclip II*** *took to the witness box with both barrels blazing.*

Very few programs arrive with as much literature in the box as *Paperclip II*. Propaganda takes on a whole new meaning. However, the first impression is that you are opening the box of a quality product. The books, brochures, manuals (and Errata sheet) all have a professional look and feel. Loading the program requires the insertion of the "Program Key", or "Dongle" which is supplied.

The use of a dongle means that backup copies of the disk can be made, but cannot be run without the key inserted. This seems like a fair compromise, although the dongle (contained in a 9 pin "D-style" casing) reputedly adds considerably to the production costs of the package.

My first impressions of the program, having just loaded it, are twofold. Firstly, I have no idea how to do anything other than enter text. There are no hints on the screen, and nothing happened when I pressed HELP. Maybe I'll have to look in the manual after all.

My second observation, and one which impresses me greatly, is the speed of the program. The cursor absolutely flies around the screen, which makes a delightful change from some of the word processors I have become familiar with. To tell you the truth, I did not realise what I have been putting up with until now.

The other feature which really excites me is the promise of a spelling checker that checks an entire document in 30 seconds.

Sounds too good to be true. Excuse me while I try it out. Press CONTROL, then SHIFT 'Y', turn over the main disk and press RETURN... 55 seconds later, and I'm back. This is just like live radio! The program took just under 45 seconds to check the 242 words I have just written, and queried the obviously wrong "speeling", a few specialised words like "dongle", and the innocent looking word "My". I've always spelled "My" that way. How embarrassing.

Other than the exaggeration of the promised 30 second checking time advertised on the box, this is an impressive performance, especially as there is no need to go through the old *Easyspell* rigmarole of storing the text on disk, loading a whole new program, then checking all the text while it reloads from disk. Definitely a worthwhile option. Another run, and strangely enough, it just took around the same time to check 343 words. One more attempt, with an old essay of 3,000 words - and still just 45 seconds. I don't know how they do it, but I like it.

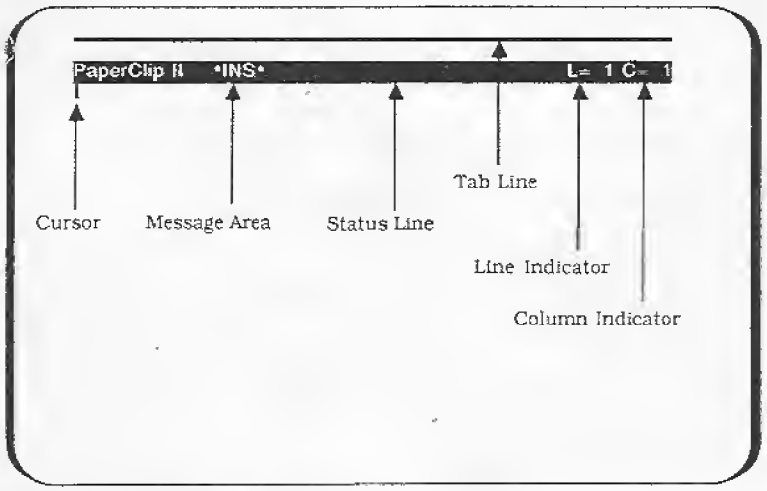
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE REVIEW.

I suppose some of you would really rather find out about the Wordprocessor than read endless praise of a spelling checker. "What can *PaperClip II* do for me?", I hear you cry.

Well, firstly, what can't it do? Unfortunately - to my mind at least - *PaperClip II* is non-WATSIPOP. It is a Post-Formatting word processor, so that rather than arranging your text on the screen as you want it to be printed on the paper, formatting commands must be entered to dictate how the printed document should look. The manual puts on a brave front - "The advantages of post formatting include enormous flexibility and speed - you can concentrate on writing, composing and editing - then turn your attention to formatting afterwards, rather than being distracted by minor details while you're composing."

Personally, I prefer minor distraction while composing to being driven to distraction trying to sort things out later. (I also prefer the acronym WATSIPOP to WYSIWYG - and I'll keep fighting!) Having said all that, it must be admitted that the text editing features of *PaperClip* are among the best I have ever seen. A comprehensive set of editing functions makes text entry very convenient, and very fast.

As I mentioned above, the speed with which you can move around text is great. Better still, there is even a 'super-fast' cursor option, which lets you move up and down your text at a blinding rate. Commands for moving up or down by 22 lines (a 'screen page'), moving to the top or bottom of the text, or moving to predetermined 'bookmark' points are also



available, together with all the standard tab and wordwrap options.

Text re-arrangement options are based on the concepts of Lines and Phrases, both of which can be copied and moved with ease. 'Instant Phrases' can be defined, making the production of standard letters a breeze. A number of Column manipulation commands are provided, which are very useful in laying out charts and tables of both text and numbers. Text columns can be alphabetically sorted, and simple arithmetical functions can be carried out on columns of numeric data.

OUTPUT

As *PaperClip* uses "post formatting", control characters must be entered in your text to define how the output should look. Again, *PaperClip* provides a huge number of options, including Chapter definition, which includes the Chapter number in headers or footers. All your fancy printer features, such as underlining, bold face, superscripts and subscripts can only be activated if the correct printer file is loaded.

The program disk provides a huge number of printer definitions, and it is likely that you will find something suitable predefined. Bad luck if you don't - naturally, a printer file definition program is included on the disk, but defining a file is a long and tedious process. The manual suggests that up to two hours may be required. This is one of the worst printer definition facilities I have yet come across.

On the other hand, there are more predefined files included on the disk than on any other wordprocessor I have seen, so I guess it all balances out in the end.

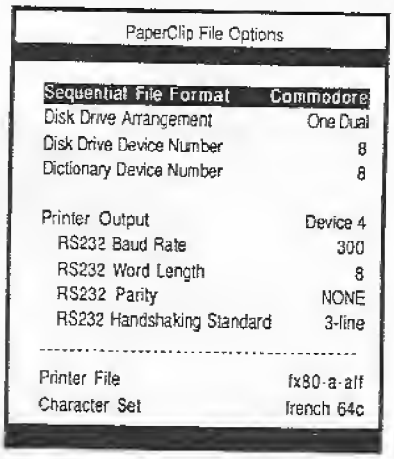
The "Video preview" function allows the text to be viewed on screen as it will be printed. No changes can be made to the text in this mode, but those who are familiar with the old *Easyscript* preview mode will be delighted with some of the advanced features available. For example, you can scroll in all four directions, and underlined and enhanced text appears on-screen. In other words, if it's gotta be a post format wordprocessor with video preview, you won't find many programs with better features than this.

COMMUNICATIONS

As a little bonus on the side, *PaperClip II* provides a thoroughly implemented Telecommunications module in the program. Bulletin boards, databases and other computers can be accessed from within *PaperClip*, simply by pressing the "NO SCROLL" key and moving into Communications mode. A large buffer can be used either to prepare outgoing electronic mail, or to capture incoming data.

Advanced modem functions like auto-answer and auto-dialling are supported, allowing the fancy features of modems like the Hayes to be fully utilised. File transfers using either Xmodem or Punter protocols are supported, together with the simple Xon-Xoff data transfer format. Baud rates of 300, 1200 and 2400 are supported, although NOT 1200/75 as per Viatel.

The Telecommunications feature makes *PaperClip* an immensely useful package for journalistic types, who can compose text anywhere on the word-processor, press a single button, and upload to the office computer. My last *Commodore Review* article was submitted in this way - straight from my 128 to the Macintosh and Laser Printer at the office. The only time it hit paper was just before it went to the printing press. The same fate awaits this little gem in just a few minutes. Of course, this has always been possible, but only with a lot of messing around - saving text files, loading communication programs, reloading text and transmitting. PaperClip makes the process totally painless - note also that PaperClip can convert files from Commodore ASCII to Standard ASCII, with the result that compatability between computers is no problem.



VERDICT

I have become very attached to *PaperClip*. However, it's not a particularly easy wordprocessor to master. It is thorough rather than simplistic, fully featured rather than fully friendly. Don't let that put you off though, because the manual is well written, with plenty of detail. If you are familiar with word-processing, particularly with programs like *Easyscript*, you will have no trouble adapting to *PaperClip II* - in fact, the process will be a sheer delight.

You will wonder how you ever managed without it. The Spelling Checker and Telecommunication modules are both excellent, and extremely useful - a real bonus. The fact that *PaperClip* does not pre-format the text on screen is a pity: it seems to be pushing against a growing trend. Their reason for doing this is not entirely convincing.

However, if you are looking for an advanced professional wordprocessing package, with every option you could ever require, *PaperClip II* may be just what you need. On the Campbell Scale of Wordprocessing Excellence, *PaperClip II* rates 83% - highly commended. Now excuse me while I hook up the modem - I've got a deadline to meet.

Distributed by ECP. **Price $99.95**

WYSIWYG, an acronym coined in recent times with the advent of desktop publishing, stands for What You See Is What You Get. Phill Campbell, a man noted for his eccentricity, prefers to use his home grown version WATSIPOP. This more pronouncable term stands for What Appears on The Screen Is Printed On Paper. You are now enlightened, if a little confused.

Programming
Superscript 1

Some of the best features in business packages go unused, lost forever beneath pages of obscure documentation. Decryption expert and Superscript guru ***Greg McKay*** *throws a little light on one such hidden capability.*

I came back! Time and time again I was tempted, and wandered off by myself to try yet another whizz bang word processing package. But *Easyscript* just kept proving that it was a stayer, it had it all, nothing flash mind you, but when your needs became more complex, chances were that *Easyscript* could handle it.

If you are a 128 owner who was weaned on *Easyscript* and who is now looking for something to mature onto, take the time to have a good look at *Superscript 128*. You won't regret it. Your *Easyscript* files remain quite usable, you gain 80 columns (optional), double sided disk capacity - 1328 blocks (1571) - and a word processing program with so much power you won't believe it.

More importantly, if you are an "*Easyscript* person" it will seem like you have seen it all before somewhere. *Superscript* is more than just a vastly revamped *Easyscript*, it has a hidden power which makes it an absolute delight to use and which will save you lots of time and effort. *Superscript 128* is programmable!

Yes, I know the feeling, that last word affects me like that too. But don't despair, no, that's right, NO knowledge of programming is required and within an hour you can have your *Superscript 128* program tweaked up and performing like a trained seal. You will wonder why you hadn't done it before.

Come on, let's go through it together. Before we proceed, a moment of your time. I will assume that you have been using *Superscript 128,* you have your data disk with defaults and printer files, and some data files of your own, maybe. You are reasonably familiar with the main menu activities and now you are looking for more. All you need is an hour of time, a clear mind, a sheet of paper and Superscript.

Onward. . .

OVERVIEW

Most tasks you perform with *Superscript* involve a series of menu selections which will result in say, disk activity, printer operation, or maybe some embedded commands being displayed on the screen. Once you have "programmed" *Superscript* you will be able to perform your most often used menu selections (or produce your most often used text phrases) by pressing only two keys. To achieve this we need only make a few changes to the defaults file on the data (or work) disk. It's easy, even I did it!

Step 1 - Preparation

With *Superscript* loaded, data disk in disk drive and a blank edit screen, the first step is to act out your most often used menu selections, writing them down as you go. For this exercise we will go through four examples together. They will be:

1. Underline on & off.
2. Change work areas.
3. Centre text on & off.
4. Write a piece of text.

Go through the selections to turn underlining on. These are "F1" (to get the menu), "f" (for feature), "u" (for underline), "S" (for start). Write these down on your sheet of paper like this:

Underline on F1 f u s

You should also get

Underline off F1 f u e

Change Work areas F1 F1 c

Now let's look at centreing text. There is a menu route that you can go through for this (*Superscript* manual R-83) but let's go another way and learn in the process.

If you do follow the menu route you end up with *cy on the screen, you then have to add a semicolon so that you have *cy; after which your text is typed in. You can also achieve this by typing "CTRL-L cy;", the CTRL-L giving you the * and you type in the rest. Similarly, to turn centreing off type "CTRL-L on RETURN" (don't type the quotes, do hit the RETURN key). The reason for the RETURN is that when you finish centreing you will want the cursor down on a new line, so why not build that in too. So we write down ...

Centre text on CTRL-L cy;

Centre text off CTRL-L on RETURN

Now for some text. If, like me, you write a lot of letters, you will probably finish off nearly all of them in much the same way. Something like ...

Sincerely,<-

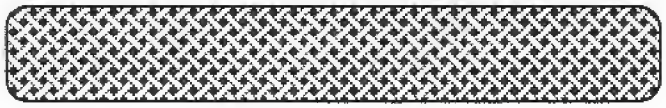
<-

<-

Fred Bloggs<-

Manager<-

That's a lot of keys to hit, about 33 for that example. Wouldn't it be good if *Superscript* could do it all for you by hitting only two keys?



Step 2 - Conversion

This involves rewriting those menu or key selections into a form that *Superscript* can understand, but it's easy, just use this little conversion ...

for F1 use / `
for CTRL use ^
for RETURN use ^m (RETURN is the same as CTRL-M)
for * use ^l (^l is in fact CTRL-L)

Your sheet of paper should end up like this ...
Underline on F1 f u s becomes /fus
Underline off F1 f u e becomes /fue
Change work areas F1 F1 c becomes //c
Centre text on CTRL-L cy; becomes ^lcy;
Centre text off CTRL-L cn RTN becomes ^lcn^m

And our piece of text, by putting in all the RETURNS looks like this:

Sincerely, ^m^m^mFred Bloggs^mManager^m
Naturally you should use your own name and title!

Step 3 - Defaults file

Clear your edit screen (F1 Erase All Proceed) and load in the defaults file from your data disk. If it is still about the same as the original defaults file, the first couple of lines deal with setting default values for margins etc. The last line is a "link" command which causes your own particular "printer" file to be loaded. Make a note of that last line ... exactly!

In between you will see a list of command key definitions which Precision have kindly provided you with. We are just going to get rid of them ... and replace them with our own tailor made ones. Place your cursor on the line below the lines dealing with margins and such (on the original defaults file this will be line 3). Now do ... F1 Erase Rest Proceed.

Step 4 - The "Programming"

Decide on which keys you want to perform which task. You can use any of the normal alpha-numeric keys, and you can also treat upper and lower case separately. Here are some ideas. Look at the number keys across the top of the keyboard. What about 1 & 2 for underline on & off? 3 & 4 for enhance on & off? etc. etc. What about the "c" for centering on and the key to its right, "v" for centering off? The choice is yours. The important thing is that whatever you decide upon ... that it makes sense to YOU. YOU will be using it, not me.

Now go ahead and type in your command key definition lines as follows. Start each line by typing *1= (the 1 in this case is whatever your chosen key happens to be). You should end up with this:

*1=/fus<-
*2=/fue<-
*w=//c
*c=^lcy;<-
*v=^lcn^m<-
*s=Sincerely,^m^m^mFred Bloggs^mManager^m<-

I have used "w" for "work areas", "c" for "centering on", "v" for "centering off", and "s" for "sincerely etc".

Now type in that last line which you made a note of, the one that looked something like this *lk:cbm dot matrix Replace the default file on your data disk with your modified defaults file (F1 Document Replace). The next time you load up *Superscript* all of your newly defined "Command Keys" will be operable.

To use them, just hit either the ESC key or the RUN/STOP key (it doesn't matter which) then in response to the prompt "Select Command Key" press one of your defined keys. *Superscript* will go through the nominated menu path or print out the nominated text for you. Magic! I suggest that you make up a small index card listing all of your defined Command Keys, and sit it just below your monitor when you are using Superscript.

Before you go

There is much more which can be said about Command Keys, but it's all in the manual. The limit is really only your own imagination. The important thing is to create "Keys" which will simplify and save, not complicate your use of *Superscript*. Here are some manual references which you should read ...

D 1, 2 6. M 25 thu 28. R 14, 60

For those of you who create lists of names ("fill files") for the mailmerge function, Command Keys are especially useful ... but perhaps in another article.

Address Author correspondence: Greg McKay, 85 Blaxland Rd, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782.

Cockroach Graphics Pirate

The Cockroach Graphics Pirate is a transparent cartridge for use on the Commodore 64, SX64 and 128 in 64 mode.

Any screen may be captured at the press of a button and saved to disk (including sprites and character sets). These files may be extensively edited using a powerful display editor supplied on disk or as the screens are conveniently saved as KOALA or DOODLE files, they may be loaded into these drawing programs. The sprite files are SPRITE MAGIC compatible and the character sets are ULTRAFONT compatible (public domain COMPUTE).

A ROACH-SHOW maker allows these screens to be compressed and compiled into a slide show which displays everything that was on the original screen including sprites. The Roach-Show incorporates an ultra-fast loader which will display a new screen approximately every 4 seconds without blanking. This is fast enough to allow crude animation!

Any screen displayed may be printed out (including sprites) using the software supplied on disk. The disk will be updated periodically to include as many printers as possible.

Unlike many HI-RES dump cartridges which only give you one shot at a hard copy of your screen, this one allows you to save your screen to disk for subsequent editing and printing. Many other utilities included on disk for interfacing with PRINTSHOP, PRINT MASTER, NEWSROOM, etc.

Price: $59.00 (subject to verification)

For more details send stamped, self-addressed envelope to:
Cockroach Software, PO Box 1154,
Southport, Qld 4215
Telephone: (075) 32 4028 after 8 pm

A ONE EYED VIEW OF GEOS.

LIfe on the seven seas, as told by the man who is rumoured to have a pet budgie and occasionally looks at pictures of sailing ships. A dedicated GEOS lover, who goes by the name ***Uncle Pete,*** *confesses all as he stumbles through GEOS.*

GEOS came to me under plain wrapper back in August 1986. It was only the black and white version but it was a good start. Right from the start it looked impressive but what was I going to do with it? The first thing I did was load it. *(Real boffins never read the manual first - Ed.)*

The next thing was to figure out how to use it. The plain wrapped *GEOS* did not come with any instructions, but it did seem to be rather friendly. I selected *GEOSPAINT;* soon I was faced with an amazing array of choices, patterns, fonts, styles, textures, brush sizes, and numerous other options.

My favourites are the brick pattern and spray pattern. By a deft bit of joystick waggling I was soon treated to a very rustic scene of aged bricks fading at the edges. A few ivy leaves would have finished it off nicely but could be added later with such features as pixel editing, easily accessed from the options menu.

Next came *GEOSWRITE,* this was not much good just yet as I didn't have a printer, but I could see that the possibilities, as in *GEOSPAINT,* were vast. Other features such as text and photo albums were a bit more obscure but the possibilities once more were astounding. Back to the desktop and you can pick up an ICON with one press of the button and perform file manipulations such as viewing the files in order of size, date, type of icon.

The file info gives information on author, type, size, etc, with the option to write protect or un-protect the files. There is also an alarm clock, calendar and a calculator which just pops up in front of the screen and disappears with the press of a button.

COLOUR

Colour *GEOS* was the next rumour and along with a handy win on a couple of horses and a misprint in the K-MART catalogue, a Commodore MPS1000 came my way. Well, now *GEOS* was suddenly a lot more interesting along with a good mate who lent me his power cartridge. That is another story altogether. The rumour became stronger and next thing a plain paper package arrived through the under-ground network, at last the fabled Colour *GEOS* arrived.

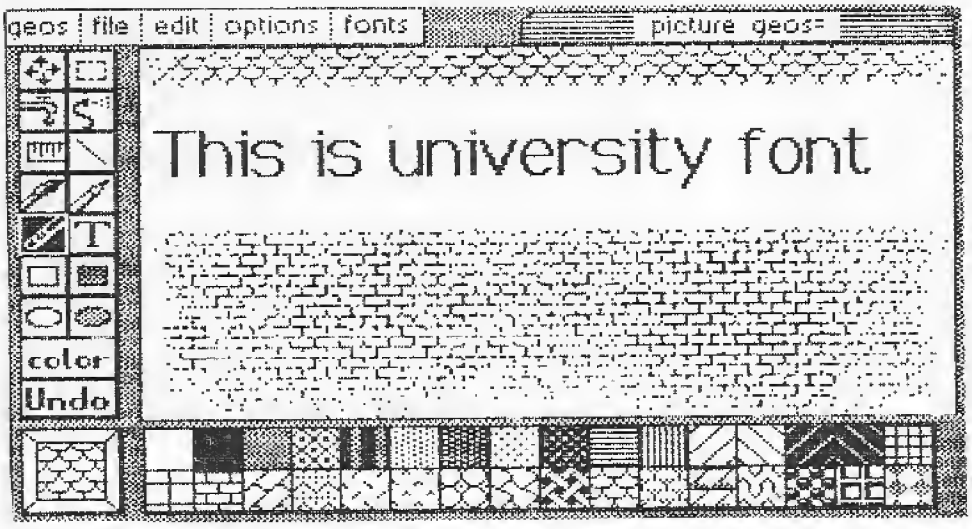
On booting up, the first thing I noticed was the lack of a preference manager, a feature of *GEOS I* which was also very interesting. But two clicks on the *GEOSPAINT* icon and we were away. The difference immediately obvious was the colour icon down the bottom of the left hand side. I selected my favourite combination of bricks and spray gun, decided on a brick red colour and suddenly - SYSTEM ERROR - oh no, my copy was corrupt, what could I do, re-boot, same thing, check the disk for errors - none apparent, re-copy the disk - try again - no good.

Alas, despair, never mind, back to the hackers, his copy bad too, so was *Questron,* but that's another story. The friendly chap at the local computer store tried to help but poor fellow had only just got his plain-wrapped copy of *GEOS I.* He had not heard of Colour *GEOS* "but how do I work *GEOS*?" he said. Taking sympathy on him I told him some tricks.

The days passed, the printer ribbon grew faint from the wonderful hi-res normal, small, reverse or plain available from the power cartridge. Until one day a fellow hacker said "It's here!" Oh joy, rush home and boot it up - appears to be OK, select *GEOSPAINT,* draw the usual, select print file - no good, what was wrong? Re-boot again, this time select printer and reload brick wall, select print. This time it works, so do the various fonts on the back of the disk.

Some of the fonts are amazing, such as telegraph, tilden and tollman, there is one with symbols instead of letters and bubble with italics, outline, bold, underlined, or plain available in each font. The ability to mix fonts and styles is catered for, there are also ways to mix text and graphics on the one scren with the pictures hidden until the document is finished to speed up the scrolling. (It would take a fortnight to scroll the amount of information *GEOS* deals with across the screen).

I read somewhere that a full GEOS picture equals about 70k, and is dumped in chunks to paper by an amazing speeded up process. All in all an incredible piece of programming. I can hardly wait for it to be released so I can see the instructions. Till next time.



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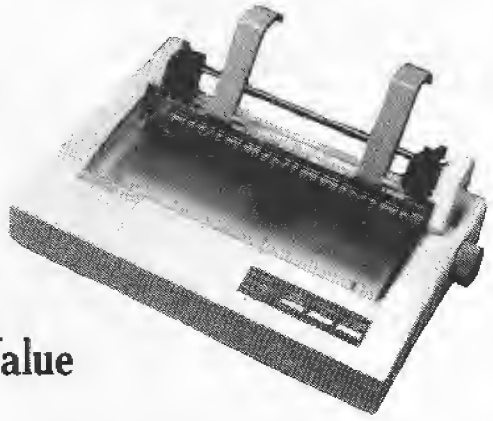

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ARM22025

Alleykat

A simulated interview with Mr. Andrew Braybrook.

"Did you tell him it was J. Mark Hunter from *Australian Commodore Review* and *Home Computer G.E.M.?*"

..."Well what did he say?"

..."What does he mean, "never heard of me"?! Tell him that I got a fan club in Eaglehawkneck, Tasmania."

..."Membership? Oh, well, my grandmother lives there, she's president, and last circular said the whole bowling club checked in."

..."Oh, he'll see me now, huh. Yeah, fame talks, right. Okay, well tell him not to wait at the elevator, I'm walking up."

..."No, this is not room service, Mr. Braybrook, it's Mark Hunter from the front desk. They told you I was coming up."

..."No, I cannot slip a microcassette under the door. Last time I did that a programmer rewired it and I got electrocuted. Look, just open the door, all right? I promise I won't laugh at your sunburn. Hey, I don't get much natural light either."

..."Man, you sure got it dark in here. Okay if I turn on the lights?"

..."All right! All right! Hey, I'm sorry, it was just a suggestion. You guys like to hang out in the dark, eh? Better watch it, though, your skin goes green. How did you get the sunburn?"

..."Are you kidding me? The diodes on your electric shaver! Is that the only light you get besides a computer screen?"

..."Man. You're making it sound like Stevie Wonder should be a librarian.

..."Now listen, Andy. What I really wanted to talk to you about is *Alleykat*. Yeah, it's beautiful, I loved it."

..."Compared to *Uridium*? Hmmm? Well, now, that's kind of a toughy. They're pretty darn close, and *Uridium* was absolutely superb and you've really made some great leaps in the new program ... well, honestly, man, I liked *Uridium* better."

..."I don't know, it was so explosive. You'd come up with this sensational new piece that was a real milestone in comp-uter programming and it just rocked the market, sequels are generally pushing it to equal then rival the original masters, you know? But listen, more evaluation of that later. It's sounding like you're interviewing me. Let's discuss *Alleykat*.'

...'Now it's pushed as the Alleykat racing season. What exactly is an *Alleykat*, Andy?'

...'A multi-mode speeder, capable of highly ambitious manoeuvres. What, better than a Cortina?'

...'That good, huh? Hmmm. So you go out competing in eight orbiting Space Stadia scattered around the galaxy. Are we talking large crowds here? We don't want anybody getting hurt, right, Andy?"

..."Okay, well controlled. I'll write that down, but England's got a reputation back home for all its violence and stuff."

..."The only violence is going to happen in the arena. Okay, that's good enough for me. Let's see. You get to choose between demolition derbys, time trials, endurance epics and other riveting battles. Yep, I can go with those adjectives. I feel good about using them, how 'bout you, Andy?"

..."Good, mate, I think this interview's turning out okay."

..."What?"

..."Oh, no thanks, buddy. I don't even think I could find my mouth, and I'd probably spill it all over my micro anyway. Now listen. First up, the player gets presented with a list of races, separated into months. Does this have some sort of effect on the driving?"

..."Well, like, does driving in say, December, mean we could get sleigh traffic overhead? We don't want this Claus guy to be coming up with any whiplash suits in the middle of a tough season, right."

'Oh, that's really interesting. At the top of the screen you get a current account display in Guineas and you select only the races you can afford to enter. That's cool. So it's sort of like, we wouldn't be seeing Cliff Young at Adelaide.'

..."Oh, you've heard of him but you never heard of me, eh? Figures. So you begin with no money, but the first five races are free to enter. Don't tell me Foster's is sponsoring way up here in hyperspace?! This world is getting weird."

..."Okay, let's get on with this interview, I got a bus waiting downstairs."

..."No, I mean a bus. I took one here and ripped out the rotor button. They're waiting for me to bring it back."

..."Okay. Now the race is beginning. The Alleykat speeder, supplied by the race organizers, is dropped into position and launched. The tortuous landscape, the computer-controlled Gravo-craft and the dreaded Katerkiller stand between you and the finish line.

When the race is over you are awarded points for Gravo-craft kills and any bonus points earned for the particular race type. If you complete the race successfully you receive an extra bonus and the prize money. You then select your next race. The season will continue until you race in the Alleykat Finale or you cannot afford to race any more. This is good documentation. Did you think it all up yourself, or did some punk down in Piccadilly mention it to you in an arcade and sell it to you for a couple of bucks?"

..."All yours. Guess we're talking big bucks, huh? Want to reveal anything about bank statements? Just give me the numbers, Andy."

..."Okay, but if you don't tell me I'll make it up. I'm telling you."

..."Right. Your vehicle is supplied by the racing organization to ensure that all pilots race with identical craft. Same sponsors or what?"

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..."Different breweries. Sure, sure. Then we got control by means of joystick steering, climbing by pulling the stick back, forward dives it. Standard stuff. But the thing here that's kinda different is that the craft's speed is adjusted by holding down the fire button and pushing the stick forward to accelerate or back to slow down. Slowing down beyond the minimum speed will cause the craft to loop-the-loop and when necessary you'd use this to avoid other vehicles and just the pressing of the fire button activates the nose-mounted gun. Yeah. I got that, I had a fun time. Ah, tell me. What do you like to talk about on a date? I mean, does the girl get landscape patterns drawn on the restaurant table cloths?"

..."Okay, we'll drop it for now, but I'm getting back to it, all right. We got a lot of female readers. So, the craft has two flight modes, speed and combat. In speed mode the Alleykat is fast, highly maneouverable. On entering combat mode, two extra wing mounted guns unfold and are fired every time the fire button is released. That'sgood, but at the same time I noted that the craft gets less manoeuverable there and slower. Looping also takes longer, etc. Did you mean for this to happen, Andy? Or will all the Alleykats be recalled?"

..."I don't know how much of problem that could be. Is there a Ford dealer on Pluto?"

..."Now, another interesting thing is that every race of the season is different. Because at least two races are staged every month and only one race may be selected per month so it is necessary to study the race information carefully to choose the best race. You just don't take these contests off the rack, do you? It's a highly complex thing.'

..'Yes, I was very careful. I took the ones with the best hotel arrangements, airport service and running water.'

..'No, Andy, I'm not mocking your game, buddy. It was just a joke. I loved your game, really. Like I said, it was beautiful."

..."One of the last things I wanted to discuss was the landscaping. Braybrook, I got to tell you, you excelled yourself here. The graphics are just sensational. Just sensational. Eight different types of landscape, ranging rom the fragile "Shatter-rock", to the tough "Hard-wall". I liked the fact that their susceptibility to fire is variable so a single shot may well not destroy a segment of the tougher landscapes. And that the landscapes may be flown over, under, or through."

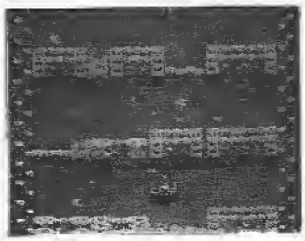
..."Come again?...No, this will probably just be a two to three page article. I don't think we can stretch it out the full length of the magazine. But some of the technical stuff, man, I tell you, you really put a punch into this stuff, huh. What, you got a VSS there, Virtual Sprite System, auto height/display priority flicker-free sprite manager, 50 cycles per second full display update for ultrasmooth scrolling, rainbow test display system for moving rainbows, colour fades and metal bar effects, 32 race tracks, each over 20 screens long, three voice and sound effects, it's brilliant. Professional expertise, Braybrook, it's good material."

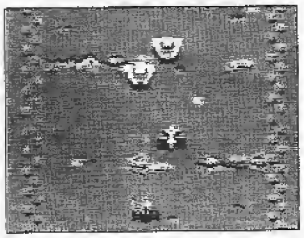
..."Well, hey, you are most certainly welcome, it deserves it. Everything about the game is perfectamundo. I can't fault it. Cos if I could, believe me, you'd be draggin' through the dirty, pal. No, I really look forward to getting some reader's response sometime soon after this article's release. Get the feedback on what the Aussie consumers are thinking of the new game. They loved *Uridium*, I don't think they'll be disappointed this time around. It's just kind of personal preference with me. I'm sure there's going to be a lot of people lovin' Alleykat even more.'

'Well, thank you so much, Andy, babe. I appreciate it very much, and my magazine thanks you, and I'm sure the reader's do too. Now there's just one other think I'd like to conduct here. I'll give you a name, and you react immediately and naturally, okay?"

..."Andrew Farrell."

"OH, Braybrook! All over my clean suit, man! GROSS ME OUT!!!"





HOME COMPUTER GEM RATING CARD

Game:Alleykat
Machine: Commodore
Distributor: OziSoft
Publisher: Hewson
Price: $39.95

Graphics:	96
Presentation:	93
Doceumentation:	84
Sound:	97
Music:	97
Impact:	95
Overall:	95

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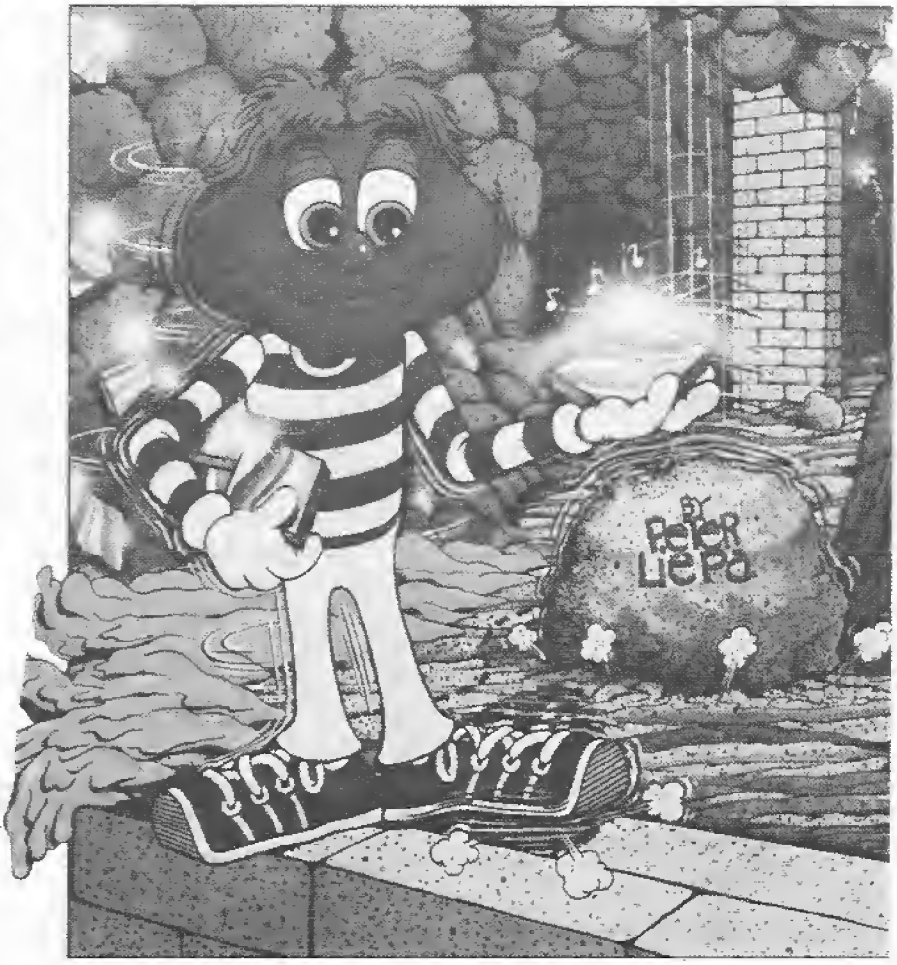
HOT STUFF

BOULDER DASH

by J Mark Hunter



Ripened coal. Think about it.

You get those black hunks out of the ground, apply the pressure, and we're talking sparkling diamond current accounts.

And the rich are dreaming. The rich are South African Caucasians slipping into slumber with the sound of the giant machinery noisily keeping busy down below, biting farther and farther into the earth, searching, scanning the walls, tasting the soil for the magic within.

When they get it, it's after a long, long tough time, and for the owners success is sweet.

Pretty soon, there's going to be a computer game on just about anything. We're quickly getting there. Today, in December, 1986. we've got one based on the above, but from a different perspective, for different reasons.

Let's go with them, find out what I mean.

And it begins with the wonderful world of animation. Computers bringing to life the colour, the sparkle, the vibrant riches of the characters in front of the pen and behind the screen.

Peter Liepa has truly done a magnificient job on his creation of *Boulder Dash*. Not since *Dragon's Lair* have the cartoon characters of a game been so pleasing, so enjoyable to view in play.

Let's dash inside and take a look.

Let's stay inside, because you'll have too much fun to want to leave.

We've got a friend here, called Rockford. He's the star of the game, and we'll be with him for the duration of the program.

Rockford is out in search of jewels and he's frequenting the caves and hollowed caverns of the earth to find them.

The objective of *Boulder Dash* is to search throughout each cave and collect as many jewels in as short a time as possible. Once the indicated amount of jewels are collected, the door to the mysterious escape tunnel is revealed to you and you go onto the next level.

What actually gets you to that objective, though? Well, Rockford starts off at the beginning of his journey in the first cave of the program. There are 16 caves in the game comprised of several scrolling screens. He must search the caves by the various methods presented to find the jewel of the cave before the timer on the particular cave runs out. Though there are many things to hinder your progress in the making.

Rockford, I have not as yet figured out exactly what his race is, but it's not human. He's sort of a Cabbage Patch Scarecrow, a cross between Freddo the Frog and John Howard. He wears sneakers, white sailor pants, and a red and white striped T-shirt. His face is orange.

He's a friendly guy, but though he has no enemies through personal affront, there are nasty entities within the cave walls that don't like him there messing with the soil and the baubles cloaked inside.

You start with three chances of success per game. Bonus tries are awarded every 500 points, and as Rockford tunnels his way to the different caves these will shimmer and again, bonuses are presented.

The current point value is shown on the top left of the play screen, to the right of the picture of the jewel. The number of

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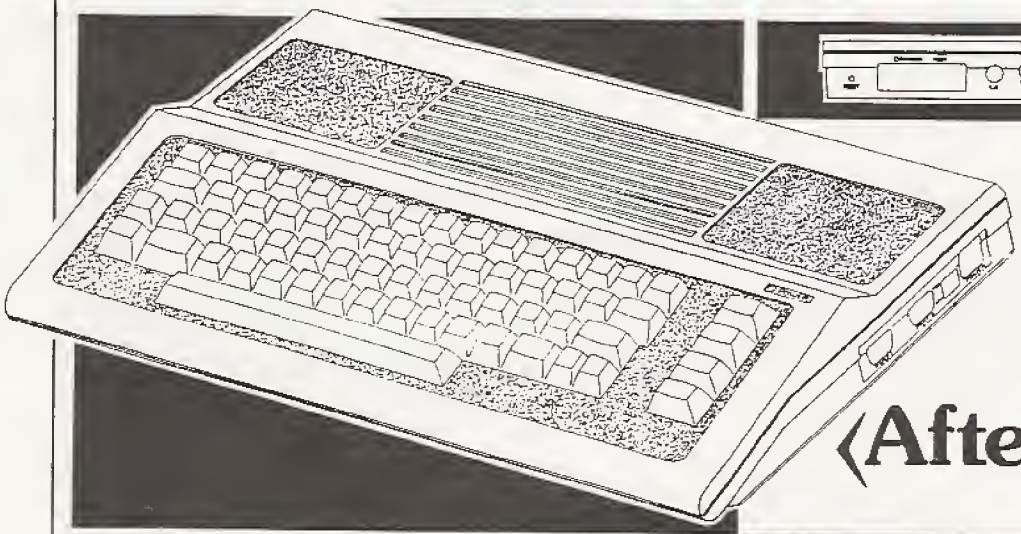

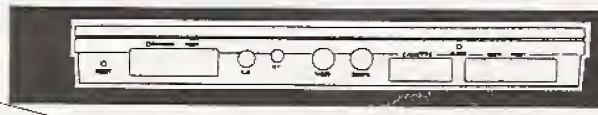

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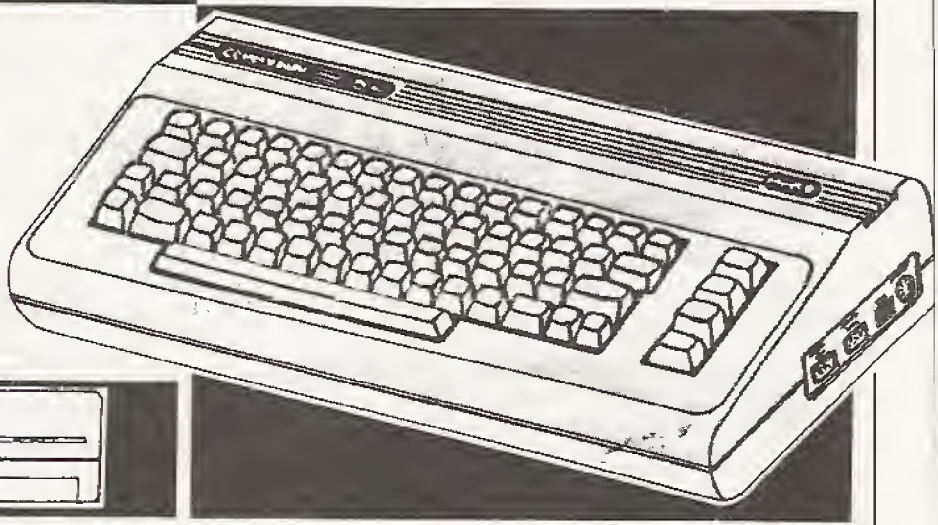

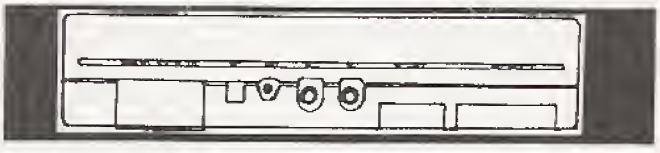

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points per jewel change as they are determined by the type of cave, difficulty level and bonus status. The bonus value occurs after the required number of jewels have been collected. Every 500 points, the tunnels sparkle for a moment and you get another Rockford. You also score 1 bonus point for each second of time remaining when you exit a cave.

The game is totally controlled by joystick and trigger button, or a keyboard can be used separately.

With the joystick you direct Rockford on his eager mole through the ground. He has the power to move massive boulders that get in his way and stand underneath such without being crushed.

The boulders are the main hazard of the play, as they stand between Rockford and the entrance to the cave, block tunnels, and hide the location of the jewels inside the caves.

As for the jewels themselves, you must collect the required number of gleaming diamonds in order to exit one cave and advance to the next. In addition to collecting jewels you can create them. For example, transforming the underground butterflies, suffocating amoebas, or dropping boulders through an enchanted wall. When the proper number of jewels have been collected a flash will let you know that the escape door is revealed and open.

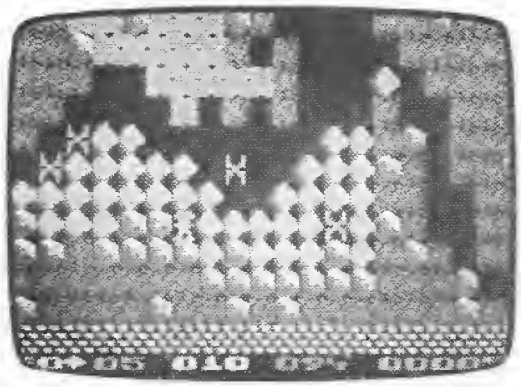
What exactly are these strange insect formations competing for screen attention?

Some of them are fireflies. They glide about the tunnel Rockford is using for freeway travel. Their behaviour is predictable, moving along the edges of all the exposed areas and exploding on contact with Rockford. And that's a big bye-bye to everyone involved. So the way to beat them is by dropping boulders on them so they blow up, and if you want to harness the energy from the force of the blast make sure that when you go for the drop it's near a wall that you want to demolish in order to get another jewel.

Butterflies are pretty much as volatile. They fly in the opposite direction to fireflies and turn into jewels when they explode.

The amoeba is a green blob that bubbles and grows through earth and air. Rockford can touch it without harm, whereas the aforementioned bugs will eat dynamite and die on contact. When Rockford surrounds the amoeba with boulders it runs out of growing space, suffocates, and turns into jewels. If only you could do that with dust.

However, if the amoeba grows too large it will die and turn into boulders. And that was not too enjoyable, I found, when



after a hard hour or so digging through the stuff I found the ossified sludge parking at the entrance of a cave and shutting up all my burrows. It's disheartening, but you're having too much fun to quit, so roll up the sleeves again and start digging all over.

Then, there was mention of an enchanted wall. Looks like every other wall in the game but when hit by a falling boulder it begins to vibrate for a limited time, and during this period any boulders that drop through it are magically turned into jewels. Once the enchanted phase is complete it cannot be reactivated in the same round. Let's not get greedy, we've all got to work for a living.

Another thing to remember in the game is that Rockford can affect an object that is next to him without moving into it. You keep the joystick button depressed and move the joystick in the direction of the object you wish to affect. Rockford won't move, but the object will react.

And when it comes to boulders you will often find yourself digging or moving downwards only to find that a boulder has been toppled by your movement and is about to land on you. The only way to avoid losing your man is to move quickly to the right or left out of the boulder's way, pure instinct of course, but part of the programmable strategy. Rockford runs as fast as the boulder falls, so it will never catch up to you unless you hesitate or stop.

At the summit, when you've got your booty and are preparing for the next flight out of there, you must decide whether to go for jewels of a higher value or exit through the revealed door for bonus points. Personally I liked "a day in the city is worth two in the bush" routine and decided to get out while I still could, taking door number 3 and splitting the show

AUSTRALIAN COMMODORE REVIEW RATING CARD

Game:	Boulder Dash	Graphics:	83
Machine:	Commodore	Presentation:	81
Distributor:	OziSoft	Documentation:	60
Price:	$39.95	Sound:	69
		Music:	70
		Impact:	86
		Overall:	81

with the cars instead of going for the extra cash. Get that later when you really know the stakes and got the underground territory mapped into your brain.

It's a fun bit of strenuous activity. The graphics are superb. The program is based on diamonds and such and that kind of glitter is hand in hand with the frames and design.

The action is electric, and the difficulty rugged. Don't let the "Freddo the Frog" rundown fool you here, because the guy is one tough toad and the situation does not exactly get you kicking back on a lily pad.

It's been an arcade classic for a while, and now the PC market is raring to go with the home front.

I recommend it, as it promises enjoyable hours when ever available and because the real stuff is a lot harder to come by, and you don't have to get dirty in South Africa to experience the fun.

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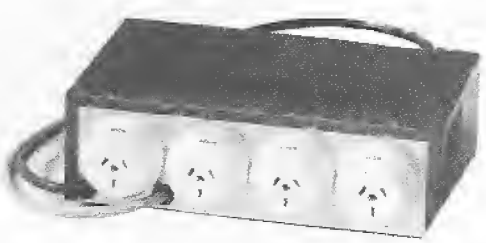

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DEALER ENQUIRIES WELCOME

IRIDIS OC

by Jeff Taylor

Hey, people, we hit a game!

We really have a winner here. And we're talking dynamite proportions!

Freeway 528, "The Beeline Expressway", Orlando to Cape Canaveral, Florida. December 19, 1985.

It was the early hours of that day, still in the minutes of the 4:00 hour. I was heading from my motel in Kissimmee on the outskirts of Orlando, or five miles east of Disney World and EPCOT Center, for the coast.

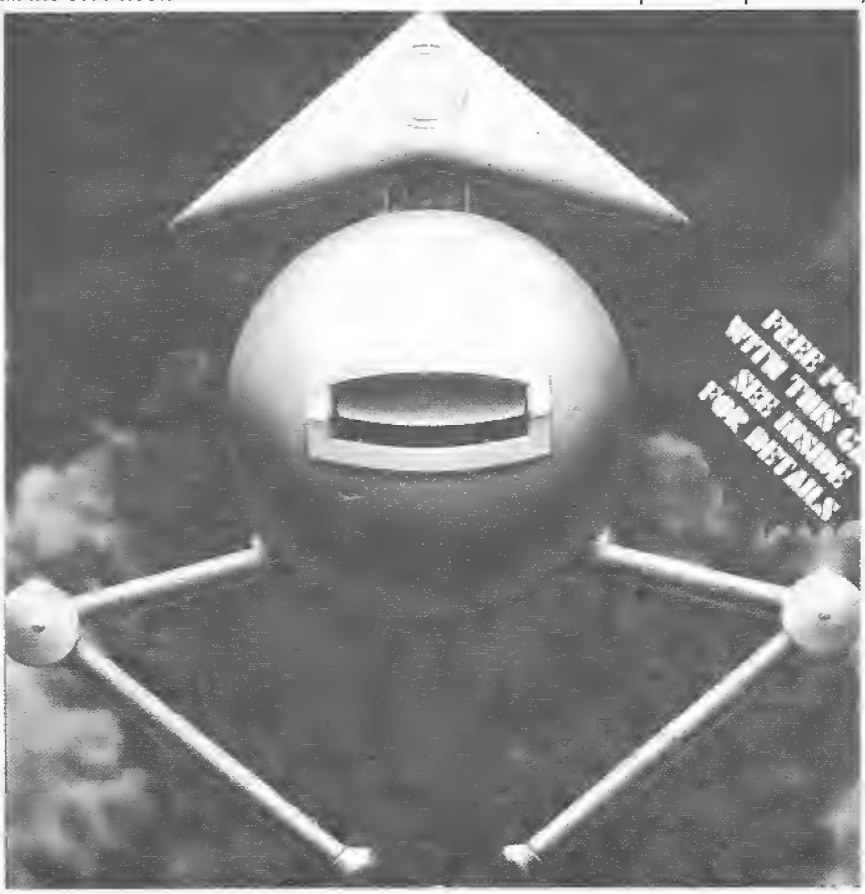
I had not had an alarm clock with me that trip as I felt it unnecessary. My morning awakenings had been with the dawn, cold dew on my face and dampness seeping through to the bone. But I had to be awake for this one, maybe the first and last chance I'd ever get to see anything like this, and me and my Cannon Sureshot were not going to miss it just for those extra minutes slumber till the 5:00 hour.

And when I said motel, I was implying maybe something like a room, but no, I had camped out in the bushes near the parking lot, stretching my shoestring bucks to the max. Student allowance, Manitoba money, it was like that.

So now I'm walking along the freeway and it's pitch dark. There's a million cars speeding through on their way to the Atlantic shores for much the same reasons as me, but I can't thumb any down because it's just too dark and therefore pointless, right. I've got to wait for the sun to split the sky and shed a ray over my way, like some kind of remote control flash-light then ... there she is ... there's the sun, it's risen another day, and hey, it looks good, doesn't it. Oh yes, just get it through my body as far as the dampness did. Yeah, and a little on the ol' Reeboks there too. Mmm, my feet could use some of your radiation.

Up ahead, the lights I'd been observing for the last fifteen minutes or so now loomed larger, brighter, and enabled me to make out the towers of a row of toll booths lined across the road and very active within. The Beeline was part of Florida's turnpike and the state government was yet to pay it all back to the various corporate construction companies around the area and wouldn't for a couple more winters yet too.

I knew I'd probably get hassled by some guy in the booth for hitch-hiking so decided to circle my way around to the right side of the roadway and walk a ways through the fields that parallelled the freeway until I'd passed a sufficient distance by. With this accomplished I pushed on, knowing my time was quickly dwindling, and if I didn't get a ride soon, I'd miss the spectacle.



The spectacle was the chance to watch the attemped launch of the Space Shuttle Columbia from the Kennedy Space Center. They'd already tried once and for all their obvious reasons shut it down, and now, today, were going for it again. This was particularly exciting because it was the first time in two years that they were using the Columbia, the first of the three shuttles then in existence.

And I tried for the lifts. Levelling my ol' thumb to the roadway and squinting my eyes to the glare of the front beams. But it was a case of two primary things; they were in too

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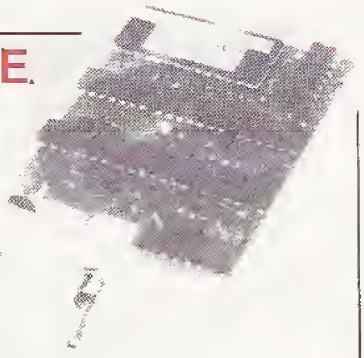

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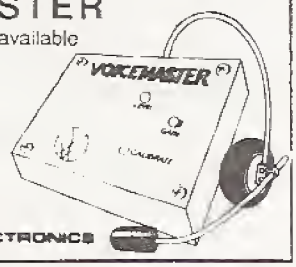

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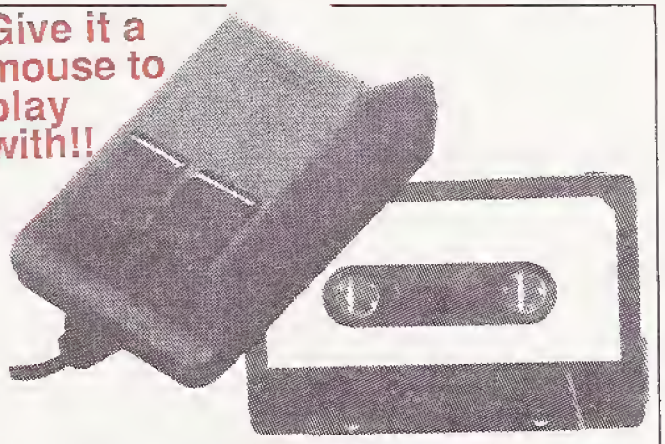

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much of a hurry to stop and waste time loading a bummed-out pedestrian into their vehicle, or if they did, were of course not too sure of just what kind of guy I might be. But I continued trying, walking some more, turning and facing the traffic, on and on into the new day in southern America.

Then the traffic began slowing, at first two or three cars which was great and all I needed, but instead began building up one in front of the other in both eastbound lanes. I looked ahead and raised by eyes in curious examination. There were two squad cars parked across the outside lane of the expressway, flashing strobes whirling around, and lots of pedestrian activity. It must have been an accident.

I got nearer, walking alongside the now very long row of cars streaming the distance of the freeway from way beyond the toll booths and finally noted that the front vehicle, a Dodge van, had been crushed in the front, almost to the seat. It was a bad accident, and for the impact to be that great on the big machine he really must have collided with the other vehicle at some speed.

I gasped then. The sight was terrible, shockingly gruesome, and surely not what I expected. The van had not hit another car but a beautiful horse that had somehow found an opening in the wire fences along the edge of the freeway and wandered out into the dark expanse, and blinded by the fierce bolts of light that speared their way from the headlamps of the many vehicles, wandered too far and too unsure.

I was repulsed, and felt so sorry for the poor animal, then wondered too, if it was really dead, supplicated the air that it was not suffering.

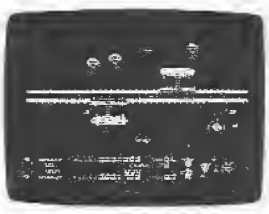
"Yes, he is dead, friend".

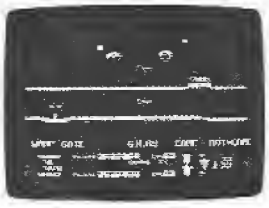
I jumped, so startled by a sudden voice beside me and whirled my head around to connect a body with the utterings. Then I jumped again, as I noted the strangest imaginings of my mind that I would ever have the chance to concoct. My hair began rising and the hole in the frontof my face got larger and larger as I gaped speechless at the celestial being.

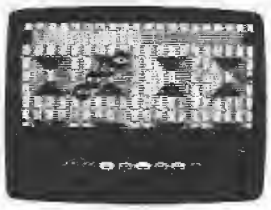
"Don't be afraid, I'm a friend".

The being that was talking to me, I don't know, instincts immediately told me that this wasn't human, and in the middle of a Florida landscape I was too far from the EPCOT centre to have any of the brilliant wonderful technicalities of the place around to amuse and bewilder me. This was something else.

Because what I was seeing in front of me was a human form, like the shell of the dimensions of one but glowing, swirling like in a container, a pure colour of emerald green, the most beautiful green I had ever had the pleasure of viewing in my life, standing there, hovering about two inches off the ground looking at me with sick smile across what were his lips, and it was a guy. He had a sports coat on and slacks, all







emerald green, radiating the night in tranquil luminations.

"Don't kill me please!" I shouted first, from the top of my brain. "Take my money, but, please man, don't kill me!"

The hazy glowed being tilted his head in bewilderment, perplexed by my instant fear. "NO. I am not here to kill, but to extend an invitation to you far beyond the ordinary, and something that will live with you forever."

I swallowed, and continued gaping, and even though the flippancy that surged in my veins around the clock burst inside me dying to say: "What, a date with Brinkley?", I was even too frightened for that.

And before I knew it, without even waiting for my consent - he took me...

Yes, I was rising further than two inches above the ground, gradually levitating to about six feet. He just watched me with that sick smile as I numbed into incoherence and gazed stupidly at the ground as I drew away.

"Hey! Hey!..." was all I managed to blurt from my whitened lips, and that was all I had time for, because we were away. With a sudden surge I found myself rocketing through the dawn air, sight of the accident and the traffic jam blurring, the people and cars gathering in thousands in the roads around the Kennedy Space Centre, the Columbia standing, waiting for the countdown, the Florida coastline, America, Earth, home...I was gone. Soaring away and away, blinded by hypnotic speed, atmospheres and atmosphere we exploded into and continued through, black doors into a million unknown galaxies, on and on for the longest, longest time.

I was entranced, actually long before having slipped into unconsciousness, both nostrils coagulated with blood that trickled to my face and mouth, ossified in the outer space air.

Touchdown.

We were somewhere. I was unconscious physically but my brain had stayed awake to dream, and what was happening to me really was what I fabled in the blood vessels of my mind, saturated in narcosis, in insanity.

Iridis Alpha. We had arrived. The beam man slapped me once across my left cheek, I snapped to attention. "We're here kid. We're going through customs. Better get that blood on your face cleaned up. Do you have your passport?"

"Passport?! What the hell are you talking about?! I'm on Mars!"

"Hey, you're not on Mars and there'll be no cursing on Iridis Alpha, you hear me?"

"Iridis what?"

"Forget it, just give me your passport, I'll get you through".

I gazed at him incredulously, angrily, comprehending nothing, but ready to tangle with any outer space idiot that tried to pick me up and take advantage of me, I didn't care what

planet they were from. I was still a nice kind of guy. And I didn't need this aggravation.

"Look flashlight face, I don't have a passport on me, and I'm not going into some foreign country or planet or whatever the hell it is in there 'cos I don't want to, and I haven't changed my currency. Now just tell me what in the world is going on here and get me back home!".

Beam man sighed, disappointed, maybe confused. "I know I should have clarified this a little better back on Earth, but I wanted to take you for this ride up here to show you what's been going on. I know you're into space and UFO's and stuff and knew you'd probably be interested in checking it out".

I softened my hostility. "Oh. Yeah? Well, sorry for the outburst there, but it's understandable, right? I mean, I wanted a lift, but this is ridiculous."

"Yes, I know."

"And sorry about calling you flashlight face, too, huh?"

"It's okay."

Iridis Alpha. The long-deserted world of the Iridians, an ancient and peaceful race who were possessed of wondrous technology. Eons ago, the Iridians evolved spontaneously into beings of pure colour and decided that their pure forms would look nicer against a backdrop of interstellar nebulae. So they left their homeworld deserted, but not wanting the barbaricraces which then populated the universe to despoil their old planet, they installed lots of nasty and distinctly hi-tech defences to discourage casual visitors.

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At the heart of these defences is a biexistentialistic field which permits the planet to exist in two reality states at one time (out of a possible five reality states in total). Most of the time your display shows both current realities. One is quite straightforward but the other is unfortunately inverted, moves in the opposite direction and has mirrored controls.

Your aim, as you battle from one reality to another, is to transfer the energy that you accumulate to the Core deactivation system so that you can enter the special bonus phase.

What we're talking about here is big. There is a multi-dimensional time construct that relates subjective and objective time. If you apply a localized 90 degree dimension shift, then one subjective and one objective second becomes equivalent. Follow me on this, huh, it's important.

However, once you're inside Alpha's orbit the troubles really begin. You see, the Iridians have rigged a multiple phase reality field around the whole planet, allowing it to, as mentioned before, exist in two realities. For some reason, you want the technology behind the planet, and you're out to get it. You become a Gilby robot fighter with the task of visiting each of the five realities and deactivating all the defences. You get a laser/destabilizer and a reality-locus shifter, which is not bad, 'cos they are not even a prototype on the computers.

The question comes to you from the provocative manual: are you a megablasting psychedelic ultrahero fit to rid the Galaxy of Zzyaxian scum or are you just the sort of wimp who has to play Ancipital with the strobo FX turned off?

NO! You shut up, you rotten bum! We can do it! We got it covered. Who do you think you are? Just put your joystick where your mouth is and try to play this game yourself.

This game.

Freaking out graphics, folks. And the music will do you the same. It's from Llamasoft, and that's a big sheep. A game with an edge, leaving you on the edge.

The screen is brilliantly designed, with the middle third of it showing such things as the design of the Warp Gate that you've got to get through on the planet, the design of the Core area and the design of the non-Core area. Gotta know both, bud. This section of the screen is then replaced by a display of a lower, mirror-image planet when you have destroyed three or more waves on the upper planet. The control panel occupies the lower section of the screen.

Your energy grows when you destroy items and falls when you collide with items. If your energy climbs too high or falls too low your Gilby will explode. The length of the energy line on the control panel shows your current energy status and this is also indicated by the colour of your ship (white is dangerously high, black - dangerously low).

You can transfer energy to or recover energy from the Core area by flying over the area and stopping. Your Gilby will land. You can fire from the ground or take a run off to the edge of the Core Area and jump up. When the Core Area energy is full up you will transfer automatically to the bonus phase.

There's so much to do, and absorption of all devoted skill and stamina is what you get to the max!

Points are earned for each enemy destroyed. The rate of scoring is shown as a points multiplier at the centre right of the control panel and varies from times zero when stationary to times eight at maximum speed.

It's fast, dynamic and too cool for its own good.

Iridis Alpha. Where Disney World just isn't enough, and this game just has to be played.

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Presentation:	94
Documentation:	78
Sound:	88
Music:	92
Impact:	90
Overall:	93

Anguish of an Adventurer

by J A Salt

As a self-confessed adventure addict, with a preference for INFOCOM games, I know only too well the frustration felt when you hit the "brick wall" which brings you to a sudden halt in the adventure that has taken over your life.

In desperation I have waylaid many a stranger whilst "browsing" through various computer shops, telephoned computer magazines, pestered club members and run myself into unnecessary debt purchasing computer magazines, all with the one objective, to get a hint or clue to get me started again on my interrupted journey.

To some extent this frustration has been experienced by all who have ever "loaded" an adventure game. Unfortunately it causes many a player to drop by the wayside. But believe me, defeating the "brick walls" and completing your adventure is very exhilarating and highly self-rewarding.

I conquered my first adventure at 4.15am one very cold morning. I had been procrastinating for weeks, having hit a solid "brick wall" just 25 points from the finish. I had become completely obsessed with this game (for the record it was *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*).

I tried every avenue I could think of and then some, to get a clue, but to no avail. Then this particular morning, I woke up as I had been doing many other nights, with yet one more maybe solution.

With coffee in hand, I loaded up and typed in my latest brainwave. Would you believe it? I knocked down the "brick wall".

"Why the hell didn't I think of that before?" was all I could ask myself. This is a question that will become very familiar to you. Seven months later I had conquered my "Mount Everest". (Final score 362 moves/400 points).

BUT BE WARNED: Adventures can be extremely hazardous and most definitely addictive. Like all compulsions the ultimate thrill of completing your adventure is short-lived. As the passing days put distance between you and your victory a restlessness and sense of despair gradually begins to swamp you. Your sleep becomes broken and finally you can restrain your craving no longer!

Let me share with you my experience so that you cannot say you have not been warned:

It's 2.15 am. I woke up in a lather of sweat and as hard as I tried could not go back to sleep. Slipping out from under the covers and apprehensively casting a fleeting glance at my hopefully sleeping partner, I stumbled out to my computer.

With bleary eyes twitching and hands shaking I rummaged desperately through my disk box. At last, my fingers made contact with the adventure I had been hiding. Whilst the game was loading (1.5 minutes) I crept to the kitchen to replenish the coffee pot.

Retreating from the kitchen as quietly as I could, sipping the first of many cups of coffee, I fell into the chair with eyes eagerly devouring the prologue which was now running on my monitor. My fingers tapped impatiently on the edge of the keyboard waiting for that magic moment when the first cursor would appear.

Suddenly, a bright flash bursts onto my screen. A surge of adrenalin races madly through my body, simultaneously reaching the tips of my fingers.

I raise my hands in readiness to type myself into total oblivion as I venture off into the unknown, to who knows where or cares ... ?

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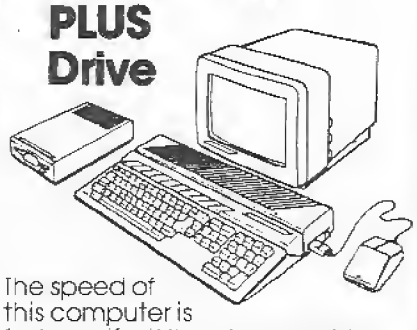

The speed of this computer is fast, very fast! It makes graphics come to life and even basic programs run at fantastic speed. There's no fancy jargon required, no complex commands to learn just plug in, turn on, point the cursor and press.

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Infocom Four in One Sampler

by J A Salt

"... Welcome to the world of Infocom's interactive fiction! This Four-in-one-Sampler contains an interactive fiction Tutorial and excerpts from four Infocom titles: *Zork I, Planetfall, Infidel,* and *The Witness.*

The tutorial introduces you to the concept of interactive fiction. In it, you will be taken through a brief sample scenario. You will learn how to communicate with the story and pick up tips for solving the types of puzzles you will encounter in the excerpts.

The excerpt from *Zork I,* Infocom's classic fantasy story, includes your discovery of the ancient caverns of the Great Underworld Empire. In the sample of *Planetfall*, a science fiction comedy, you will find yourself stranded on a deserted alien planet. In *Infidel,* a challenging Tale of Adventure, you will be taken to the heart of the Egyptian desert, where you will search for a great lost pyramid. A sample transcript from *The Witness* will give a glimpse of the action in this 30's-style detective thriller ..."

The above extract was taken from an excellent disk brought out by Infocom titled *Four-in-one Infocom Sampler* as a way of introducing themselves to prospective adventurers. (My thanks to Computer 1 at Randwick). By working our way through this sampler together, I thought it might be a good way for us to get the feel of playing adventures.

The basic tools needed by any adventure are:

1. Pen
2. Paper
3. Game Disk
4. Formatted SAVE disk (not required for *Four-in-One Infocom Sampler.*

It is important to record your moves and map the locations as you discover them. Map making is an important aid to the completion of nearly all adventure games. Without a map to refer to, the adventurer may find him/herself hopelessly lost in a maze, unable to find the quickest route from one place to another or perhaps worst of all, unable to remember how he/she found that secret room which held the lost treasure.

Initially when you first venture into unknown territory you will visit many places that are of no importance to the game. By recording your moves you will soon become familiar with the territory and discover the quickest routes to follow as you progress into your adventure. The ultimate challenge to a good adventure player is to complete your adventure in as few moves as is possible.

Let's play *Four-in-One Infocom Sampler - Part I:*

Load up your *Four-in-One Infocom Sampler* Disk to the Tutorial and follow the instructions which are self-explanatory. When you have completed the exercise offered to you, compare your results with my efforts.

Exercise - Tutorial excerpt: 1st example

look around
inventory
go east
go west
take lantern
turn on lantern
go east
take key and net
go west
read sign
open door
mahogany
open mahogany door
open mahogany door with key
go south
open mahogany door
go south
close door
catch butterfly in net

(50 points/19 moves)

2nd example:

l
i
e
w
take lantern
turn on lantern
read sign
e
take all
w
unlock mahogany door with key
open mahogany door
s
close door
catch butterfly with net

(50 point/15 moves)

GAME TUTORIAL

The four moves deleted from my second example may not seem very significant in this small exercise. However, when playing a full length game with many locations to be explored and various objects needed to be taken, your initial moves can run into the hundreds.

I hope this article has succeeded in whetting your appetite for an adventure game and that you will move on and sample the excerpts offered to you on this disk. In a later issue I will share with you my attempts to venture into *Planetfall*.

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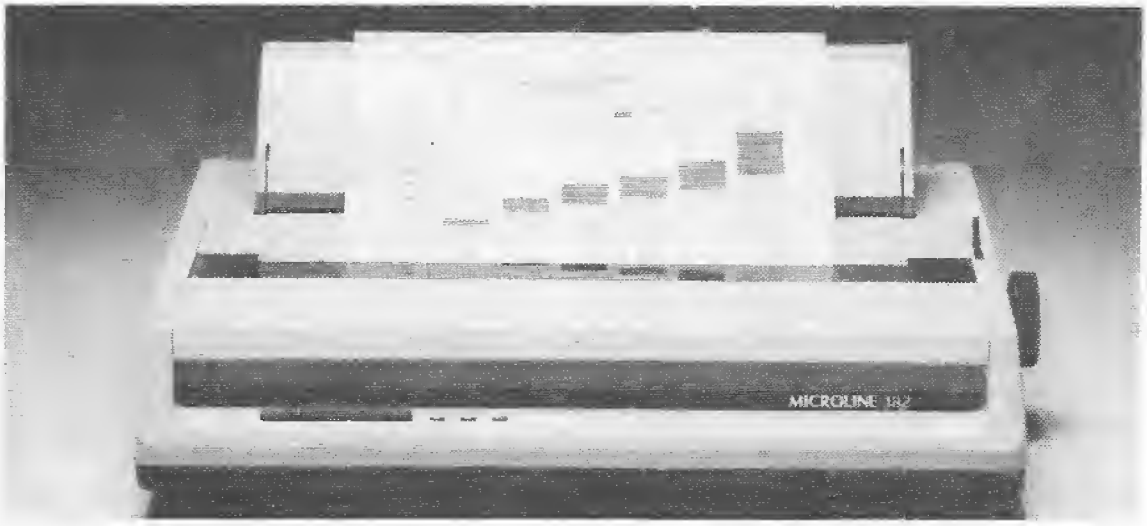

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Amiga Column

We feel a strong commitment to Amiga users - a demonstration of which is our continued bid to include a regular Amiga section. Taking over from our previous columnist, Craig Shoetrumpf, are *Stephen Gordon* and *Shane Watts*.

Here we are with our first Amiga column for this magazine. Our aim is to provide a general rundown of what the Amiga's capabilities are, what's new for the Amiga, and to give hints, ideas or a helping hand to anyone who needs some advice.

HISTORY

Amiga wasn't actually designed by Commodore, but by a Silicon Valley firm called Hi-Toro which started design on the machine in 1982. Amiga (originally called Amiga Lorraine) is Spanish for friend. The original intention for the machine was for it to be an inexpensive home computer with resplendent graphics and sound used for video games. Amiga was to be sold in America for somewhere between $300 and $400.

But due to Amiga Corporation's lack of funds, they sold out to Commodore Business Machines. Commodore turned the Amiga from a games machine into an all purpose Macintosh-like system. Amiga was released on July 23, 1985 at the Lincoln Centre in New York.

Critics couldn't stop raving about this new wonder machine. Amiga was set to change the PC market of the world. It was cheaper than its rival from Apple (the Macintosh), and miles better than its low priced competitor from Atari (the 520ST).

Macintosh's specs just couldn't live up to those of the Amiga (non-colour against 4096, sound technology far surpassing that of the Mac, multi-tasking, and the Amiga is fully expandable). The Mac still sold well and still sells well.

A lot of people weren't prepared to give the Commodore Amiga a go, partly due to the reputation surrounding the company as a producer of games machines such as the best selling Vic-20 and CBM 64. Another problem was the continuing rumours surrounding Commodore's financial position.

These conditions were some of the hardest any firm could hope to face, and most would probably have gracefully bowed out, but Commodore pressed on and is still around today. People now know that they can expect a lot more from Commodore's Amiga than they may have originally thought.

SOFTWARE

Software for the Amiga is surprisingly plentiful for a new machine. There are some good wordprocessors available such as *Scribble* (the program used to write this) and *Textcraft*. For the games enthusiasts there are top titles such as *MindWalker* (they should have called it Mind-Blowing because that's exactly what it is) and there is also *Marble Madness* (the best arcade conversion we've ever seen.)

For those of you who are adventure freaks there is the adventure which is still the most popular and most played in the world, ZORK, or superb graphics adventures like *Mindshadow* and *Tass Times in Tonetown*. There isn't much (if anything) yet for the professional musician, but for those who want to have fun there is the fabulous *Music Studio*.

The list goes on and on, with spreadsheets, data bases, telecommunications, eduction etc. We hope to be reviewing or even previewing as many of these as possible, as soon as possible. We would also like to start either a Buyers' Top 10 or Readers' Top 10 - so send what you consider to be the best programs to the address at the bottom of this page.

Another section we would like to start is a Hints & Tips or Helpline section. The success of this is up to you, so anyone with any questions they would like answered or hints they would like to let others know about, send a letter to the address below and we will answer all queries by magazine, by letter or by phone (so put in a phone number if you want.)

My address is as follows:

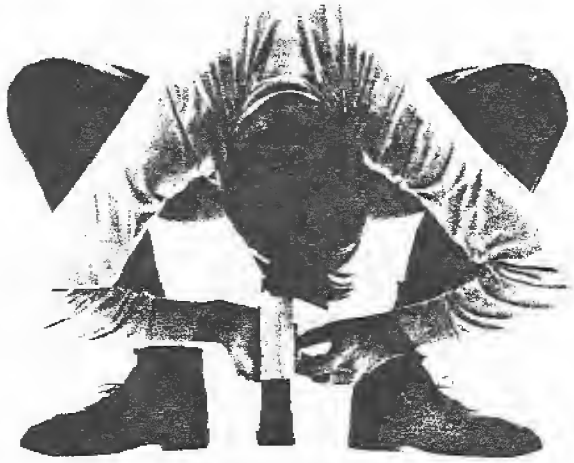
Shane Watts, 869 Pittwater Rd, Collaroy, NSW 2097.

Or else give United Computers a ring on (02) 29 5088 or (02) 981 4455.

Don't forget to send me a list of your favourite programs or hints and tips.

MindWalker
- for the Commodore Amiga

by Stephen Gordon and Shane Watts



Everyone has a sense of adventure, a secret ambition. This is exactly what I had when I first played *MindWalker*. I had heard so many brilliant remarks about it that I just couldn't wait any longer; and I must say that my ambition for the following 12 hours was to finish the thing (a feat I didn't achieve.)

MindWalker would have to win my award of the year for addictiveness.

Stuck in a mental institution, you are trying to regain your sanity, via your dreams. You probe the far corners of your mind trying to piece together a puzzle of old thoughts. This is done by finding a crystal (the beginning of your path) and travelling to the goal (the end of one piece of your puzzle.)

So far so easy eh? Not so. There is one hitch. You must make a path there, and this is done by using the appropriate character for the right terrain.

Your choices are a Wizard, Human, Nymph and Spriggan. Each one can only walk on certain terrains, so if you cross into another character's path area you must toddle off to the nearest pyramid, change shape and then find your path and continue your quest. There are the usual meanies to make this task as hard as possible (what game would be complete without them?) These little beggars try to kill you with a death ray which comes slowly towards you.

Once hit the screen displays a skull while the speakers emit a super low sound (capable of blowing some pretty good speakers!!!). You can of course defend yourself against these baddies with your energy ray which enthralled me when I first saw it.

As you hold in your button you can control a burst of energy which literally wipes everything off the face of the earth (or mindpath in this case), and if you should pick up an E = and mc2 along the way (for those of you who don't know, when joined this makes up the energy formula E=mc2) those baddies had better watch out. For a limited period of time you can have what can only be described as a humungous burst of energy which is fatal.

A map of the current area of the 'brain' can be called up and this can help you find the nearest pyramid, crystal or tube as well as let you determine what creature to turn into for which area. Once the goal has been reached (a white flashing square) you then find your way to the nearest tube and go plumiting down a tunnel trying to enter a green doorway. Having done this, you have to wander around a maze following the beat of the music as it gets faster trying to find a small diamond.

You have a ray gun to fight off the baddies (who can do dreadful things to your strength level). You then find your way back to the tube and get taken to the next screen. The fourth screen could be called hypnotic. You are given seven pieces of puzzle to place in a 7 x 7 grid on the left hand side. As you complete another path you are given another seven pieces. If you get stuck (quite an easy thing to do) you can get the computer to help you by 'shooting' at the piece you would like it to place. This of course doesn't come free.

Each time you obtain help you loose 1000 points off your self development bonus. The finished product is as I said a hypnotic pattern which really is brilliantly done.

When you complete your current lot of seven pieces you are taken back to complete your next path. This of course becomes harder with annoying things like screens you can't complete till you hit a 'tower' displayed somewhere in the screen.

While trying to reach this there are a screenful of baddies trying to zap you into nothingness, and in the higher levels this really is a form of pain as you watch man by man get destroyed while trying to get out.

This is truly a game of fantastic design and deserves the praise of everyone. The hardest part of the game is trying to stop playing it. Although simple at first it can issue a challenge to the most die-hard arcade enthusiasts.

If you are like me and have got your Amiga plugged into your mega-powerful stereo system with plenty of 'herbs', take a bit of good advice: TURN DOWN your bass response. This thing has been known to kill speakers with it's fantastic sound effects.

Another bit of advice, if you don't already have this game BUY IT straight away. It's a programme no Amiga-user should be without.

MindWalker will give anyone more than a run for their money, and remember, when you finish this tremendous game you may have gained your sanity in the game, but be careful of the sequel: trying to regain your OWN sanity!!!

Till next time, Happy Mindwalking.

Review copy supplied by Sydney United Computers.

Letters

We welcome reader contributions in every form, most of which you will find published on these pages. Please don't hesitate to send your cryptic questions or comments.

Dear Sir,

I am thinking of buying a disk drive for my C64, and would like to know which drive would the most reliable make, for a decent price.

I've had my C64 for about three years, and am only now getting into programming.

Could you please give me a list of shops from where I can get some programmes.

Thanking you
Paul Smith
Boyne Island Qld 4680

Ed: Disk drives are much of a muchness, all with their share of problems. Whilst the husky 1541 is readily available and easily serviced, fancier versions are available such as the SKAI super drive which sells for a similar price.

128 bugs?

Ed: Some time back we published a story by Paul Blair on the C128. A letter from a concerned reader prompted this reply from Commodore:

Dear Mr Trevena,

Thank you for your letter of 16th July in which you made reference to an article in *The Australian Commodore Review.*

As mentioned in the article the review was done on a pre release machine which had ROMS which were never intended to fall under such close scrutiny.

Most of the bugs were ironed out before the C128 was in mass production and the C128D was ever thought of. Some of the bugs have still remained, however, because some slipped through, some were very minor and to change them would cause compatibility problems and others becuase any attempt to fix the problem would most likely produce several others.

The problem with the 'Caps Lock' and Q key sequence still remains. The reason it still remains is due to the last two reasons above. The problem with the RS232 interface has, however, been fixed.

I doubt whether more than 2% of users actually spot any bugs in the production machines. In closing I would like to say that although I do not doubt Paul's comments, as I know he has a great deal of technical ability, I would tend to put it to context. The article pulls a pre production machine to pieces and comments on any features whether or not it would acutally cause any user aggravation. Obviously some technically minded programmers will have to work around some features but I would have to say that this would be no worse than any other machine on the market.

Garry Mason
Technical Support Manager
Commodore Business Machines

Reset switches and printer ribbons

Dear Sir.

I am writing to give your readers some information and maybe get some back as well. I have a Commodore 64 with a 1541 and MPS1000 printer.

I have been computing for three years now and one of the things I have done is fitted a reset switch to my computer. I did this by soldering (with a fine tip) wires onto the strips on the back of the serial plug. The wires go on pin 2 and pin 6. I put a small momentary push button switch across the wires and fitted into the back of the computer.

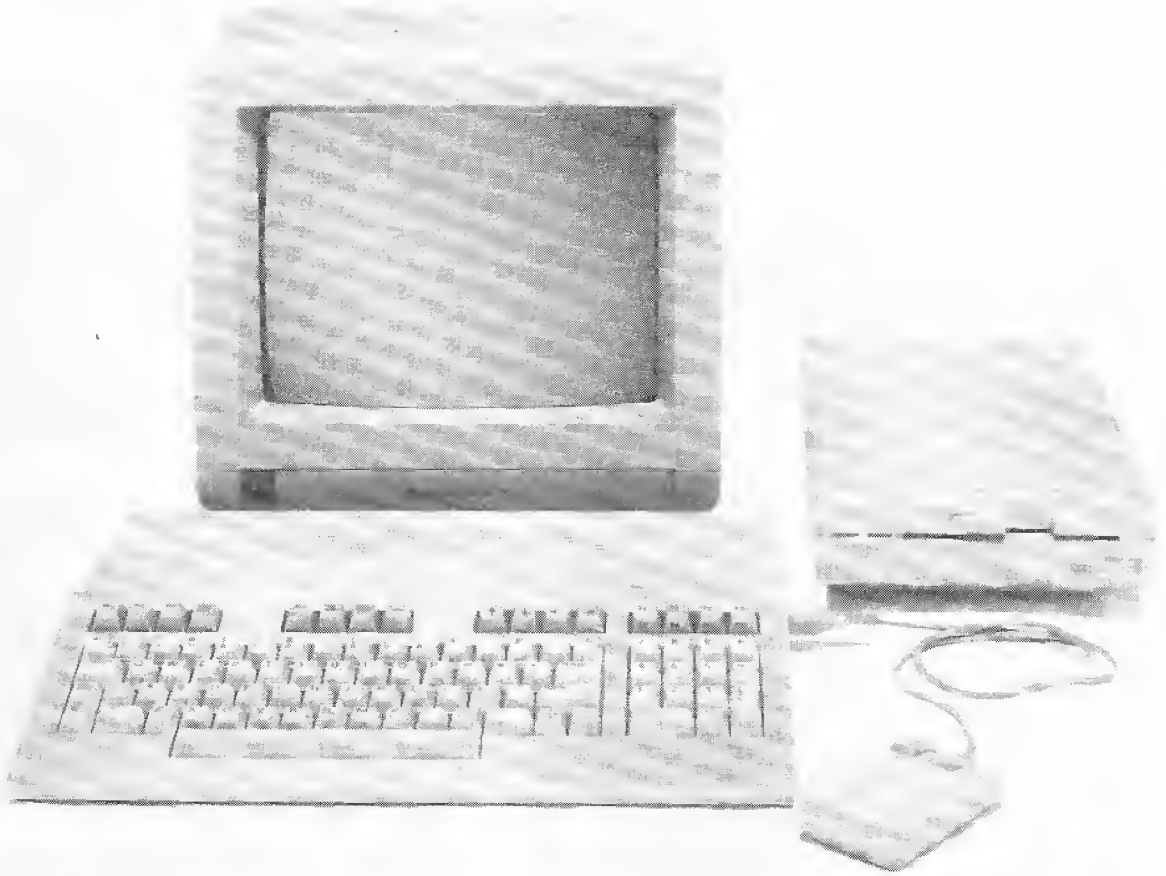
Before I took the plunge and drilled a hole in my precious computer I made a simple device to test out my plans. I obtained a TANDY 6 pin din plug CAT No 274-020, soldered wires to pins 2 and 6, then soldered a push button across them and when the button is pressed BINGO! cold reset. A simple unnew or old program and things come back. I have noticed that this technique does not work on all Commodores but for about $1.20 it's cheap to find out.

Now can someone give me some information about how to recondition my printer ink cartridge, maybe a product or tip on how to extend their life. I have already experimented with lifting the ribbon slightly by placing a rubber band around it but I suspect this would not get the manufacturer's seal of approval. Hoping my information is of some good to some of your readers.

Anthony W. Smith,
West Wallsend, NSW.

Ed. Re-inking is possible by soaking the ribbon in ink obtainable from most stationary stores. However the results are often far from satisfactory.

As for the reset switch, pins 1 and 3 on the USER port may also be used - a nifty idea.



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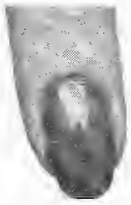

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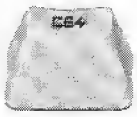

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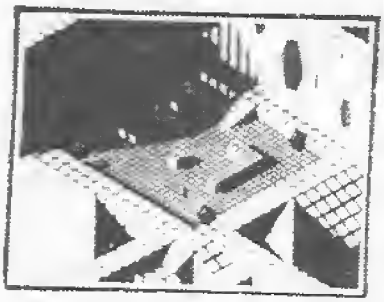
Arcade Action

by John Hatchman

Well, here we are for another month of arcade conversion updates, and let me tell you that there is plenty to talk about.

There have been a number of conversions released in the last month, and most of them look like successes in the making.

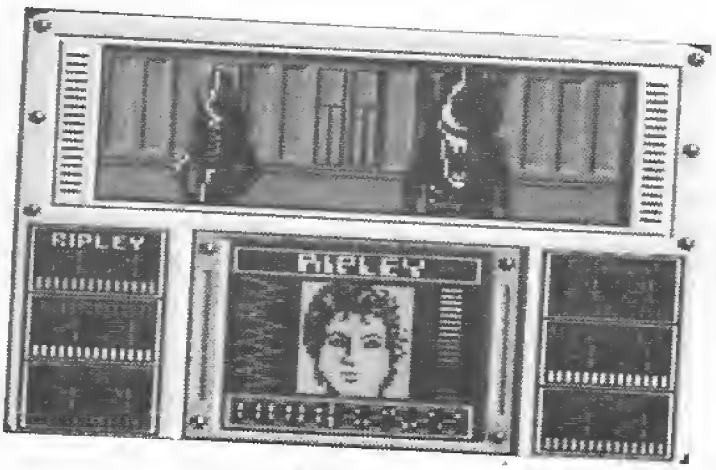
Some of the conversions were *1942, Ikara Warriors, Shao Lin's Road, Gaol Break, Marble Madness,* and *Paperboy,* which has been advertised for many months but should finally be out in your local software shop for sale this month.



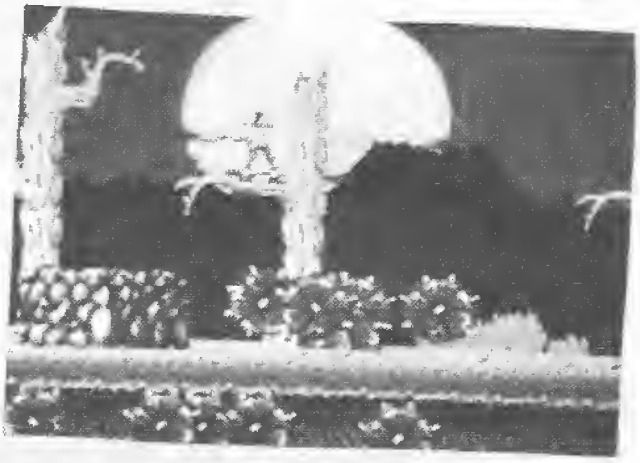
Shao Lin's Road

Marble Madness

Another movie come game conversion is *Aliens.* You have to guide the marines around the station without getting killed before the rescue ship arrives.

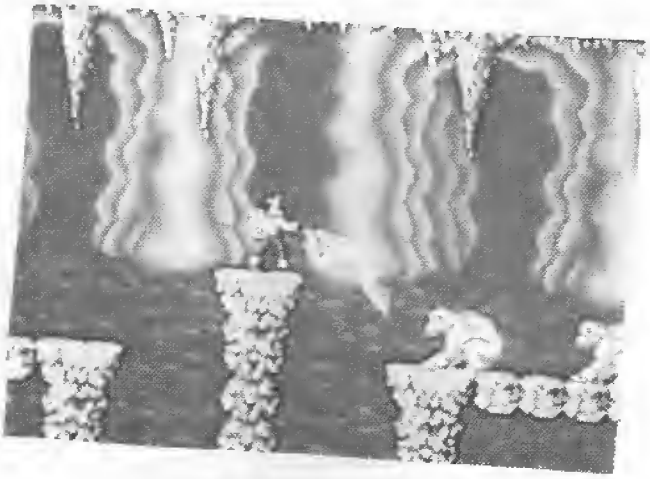


Aliens



Rygar Warrier

Whilst wandering through the local arcade parlour, I set my eyes on one machine called RYGAR. The game is set a few million years ago, after the dinosaurs prowled the earth for food. All you have to do in the game is run from left to right, jumping gaps and shooting monsters that decide to ruin your progress, and that's about all there is to it. All combined with great colourful backdrops and effective sounds. Quite an interesting looking game to get into, and not too large to become an arcade conversion (hopefully).



Rygar Warrier

ELITE

Another arcade - cum - game from Elite, the company that brought you *Ghosts'n'Goblins*, is *1942*. The aeroplane flight shootemup game that offers not much of a challenge. It should be available by the time you read this column.

Another Elite effort - *Paperboy* makes its appearance on the software market this month. I only had a quick preview glance at the Spectrum version, and I already can't wait for the Commodore version to hit the streets at any time now.

Ikari Warriors is also another Christmas offering from Elite, and it seems to look like a two up *Commando* style game- with enough luck the sprites won't corrupt like the Commodore version of *Commando*. For some strange reason, Elite put all their games on the same computers in the exact same formats on disk and cassette.

Anyone who has heard of *Scooby Doo* and hasn't seen the game has only one problem - locating it. It has been advertised by Elite for around a year now and they have been mucking around trying to release the completed version. Well, it has arrived just in time for Christmas wrapping. Judging by the screen shots, it leaves something to be desired. So hopefully it will be a chart topper for all the little kiddies in video readers land.

Well, I think that Elite must have hired every programmer in England to complete all the games they have converted and released in the last two months. Just to add to the monotony of it all, here comes *Space Harrier*. Also available on the usual computer formats, it doesn't however offer the effect of the arcade cartoon version (what a pity).

That's about all there is for Elite this month. Next up are US GOLD with a bag full of fresh releases, alongside GREMLIN GRAPHICS. US Gold are in the process of releasing *Super Huey II* the helicopter flight attack game. The sequel to *Super Huey*, it also has another four missions to complete, and if you are curious enough there might be a review in next month's magazine.

Xevious, the vertical arcade shootemup, has finally been given the all OK and will be available in your local shop in a week or so.

Going by the list of software releases I have just received from distributors, the magazine will have to take on a few pages so that I get some more space.

Looking at the list, each developing company has been hard at work all year just to make the Christmas spree of software buyers.

Electric Dreams are also brightening the skies with a few new releases. They are *Big Trouble in Little China* and *Hijack*.

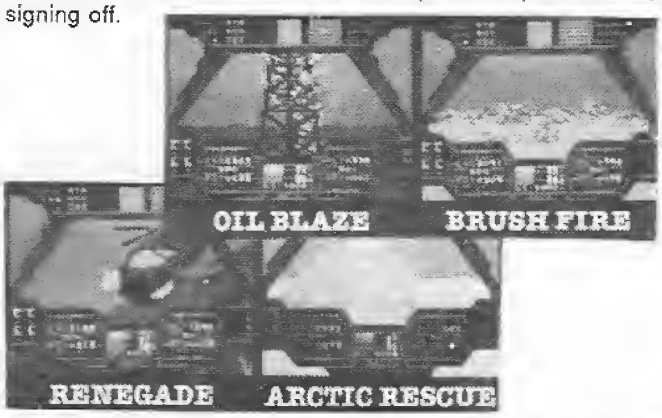
Big Trouble is the story of your quest to kill a Chinaman called Lo Pan, you must use magic and anything you can gather along your quest to overthrow and destroy the evil in Lo's domain.

Hijack is what it sounds like. You must try and control the situation using a combination of arcade and strategical skills. From what I have heard, they are so-so games, so don't go and make any silly moves till you see the review of them.

Well, that's all the conversions for this month, and keep an eye out for more reviews in either the next issue of *The Australian Commodore Review* or in *Home Computer GEM*.

Remember, always be careful to examine every game carefully before buying, and always take note of the price and consult a review of the product before making a final decision. That's for all you new computer heads out there.

Until next month, this is John (hackman) Hatchman, signing off.



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TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

- hint sheet

Level 1: Just get to the exit at the upper left side - kill bat for extra points.

Level 2: On the second branch down on the first tree (from left to right), it is necessary to run off the brnch at maximum speed. It is impossible to make it across the gap by jumping.

Level 3: The gem is introduced in this level. To get it, Conan must avoid the ants and take the teleporter (the flashing green door that constantly appears & disappears) to get up to the highest ledge. Once Conan has the gem, he must again use the teleporter to get down to the lowest ledge.

Conan must then avoid the scorpion and place the gem in the gem holder above. Once the gem is placed there, a large bubble (big enough to carry Conan) rises up from the lava. Conan can jump into the bubble and ride it high enough to be able to jump and clear the lava pit. NOTE: If Conan jumps and touches the Avian Ally, you will be rewarded with an extra hero.

Level 4: You must try to get two gems in the gem holders located on the lower right hand corner of the screen. When this is accomplished, the key will fall. Take the key to unlock the door and exit the level.

Extra boomerangs are placed on the screen at random places for a period of time. The white blocks on the ledges are trap doors. The player is destroyed if he touches the enemy, but he can destroy them with the boomerangs.

The floating ledge falls on the left and splashes in the lava, but reappears above the geyser eventually, and is lifted up until it is destroyed on the cave ceiling. The ledge reappears on the left and restarts the process over again. You can jump from the Geyser through the waterfall without harm.

Level 5: On level 5, there are two locked doors and only one key. The only key is behind a deadly lightning machine. To complete the level, Conan must run down the ladder, avoid the Flame Monster, and pick up a gem from the gem pile before all of the gems change into dragons which appear on the third ledge.

The player can bring a gem from a previous level. All the the remaining dragons must be killed in order for the first door to unlock. Then the gem must be placed in the gem holder to turn off the lightning machine.

Once the player teleports all of the green flashing areas along the walls, and kills all of the dragons, the top teleporter will disappear and the small candle will flare up, becoming deadly. If the player dies without a gem, one will be placed at the bottom of the screen.

The hero can exit the level by using the key to unlock the remaining door. Extra boomerangs are placed at the bottom of the screen if you have less than 10 in reserve.

Level 6: The Van deGraaff machine in the middle of the screen is the source

of the Spark Creatures. The Spark Creatures cannot be destroyed by boomerangs.

There are a set of moving plates on the second ledge (from bottom to top). When the two plates are directly over one another, a strong and deadly voltage jumps between them. The bottom plate is deadly to the Spark Creatures and the hero, therefore, can ride the plate safely.

Conan must destroy the floating eyes to complete the level. When an eye is destroyed, a piece of ladder is added to complete the ladder on the top ledge. Once the ladder is complete, Conan must climb up and boomerang the chain holding up the large chandelier over the Van deGraaff machine. The chandelier will fall and destroy the machine, stopping all electrical activity on the screen. This in turn, allows the player to exit the screen (the lightning in front of the door would have killed Conan if the Van deGraaff machine was still working).

Level 7: This is the final level. Here the hero meets Volta. Volta is up in his castle chamber, seemingly safe from Conan. Volta waits for gems to come down the conveyer belt. When one does, Volta reaches out and grabs it, and puts it in his machine.

This machine turns gems into deadly stars. Some of the stars are purple and some are green. A purple star, when hit by a boomerang, reverses its direction for a period of time. When a green star is hit, it turns into a gem again and drops to a ledge. When Volta desires, he sends a star down to open the dragonflies' cage door. Once the gate is opened, a dragonfly will fly out and roam the level for a period of time. Dragonflies can be destroyed by boomerangs.

If the hero should happen to fall down the pit marked TO 6, he will fall to level 6 (to complete again, and no extra boomerangs will be given).

Another small point of interest on this level is the vertical shaft on the right side of the screen. To venture back up to the top two ledges on the far right side, the player must activate the little red arrow pointing up. To do this, Conan must touch it. Once activated, the hero can move over the top of the blue section of the ledge, on the left side of the arrow, and it will catapult him to the ledge above.

To complete the level, the hero must put three gems into the three holders beneath the bird cage. The bird cage contains the Avian Ally. When the gem holders are filled, the cage door to the bird cage opens and the Avian Ally flies out, picks up Volta and carries him over the lava, dropping him into it. The bird then comes back for the hero and carries him to safety. The program then loads a page and the player receives 20,000 points per man bonus.

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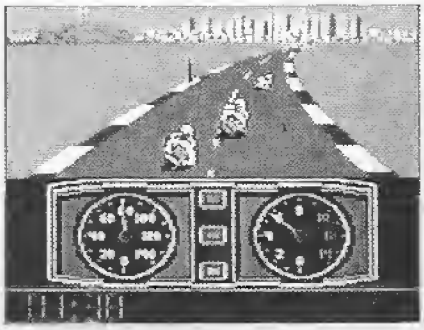
It's all a blur. No time to think. You've just gotta pump it. The next turn's the steep one. Bank, bank! The curve's wide open, but the screeching wheels of the bike in front are kicking gravel right in your...your...

You hear a phone. A phone? Hey, wait a minute. This isn't a bike. It's a chair. It all comes back now. Yes. You're home. The pizza's here. The computer's on. Looks like it's going to be another quiet night after all.



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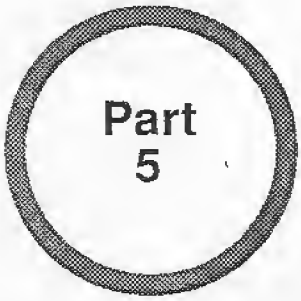


Telecomputing

by Gareth Powell

How fast can it go?

Most computer communications can take place on telephone lines designed for voice transmission. There are, of course, lkimits to the speed that information can be pushed down the telephone wire and this speed can also be severely affected by the type of telephone exchange your phone is connected through.

Many exchanges in Australia are now totally electronic but quite a few electro-mechanical exchanges still exist which can restrict the speed of flow of computer communications.

This problem is not confined to country areas.

In New South Wales both Penrith and Camden are notious for providing something less than ideal lines for computer information transmission.
There is a way rouind this, but it is very expensive and only suited to large businesses. That is to have a dedicated line. The cost of these, if you are any distance from a metropolitan centre, is quite prohibitive.

The theoretical upper limit of speed of transmission on telephone lines is 9,600 bits per second - about 15- words - but in reality this is rarely, if ever, achieved in non-commercial use because of the increased complexity and therefore cost of the modem.

(Let us insert a little demystification here. When you talk about telecommunications using computers you will hear the words "baud rate" and "bits per second" used freely. Technically, they are almost the same, but bits per second is the more accurate of the two. /A bit is the smallest amount of information a computer can readily understand. You can work out the approximate speed in letters per second by dividing the bits per second rate by ten.)

The two most popular speeds in Australia at the moment are 300 bits per second - which is about as fast as a normal person can read - and 1200 bps which is precisely four times as fast. These two speeds are the standards for communication between computers in Australia using the telephone system, and almost all modems on sale are either 300 bits per second or 300 and 1200 bits per second.

Some time in the not too distant future we will see 2400 bits per second become a new standard as telephone exchanges improve and the need for faster computer communications grows.

For the sort of amateur and small business use we are discussing here, these higher speeds are not truly relevant. It is true you will quickly find 300 bits per second can be snail-slow if you are downloading a large amount of information such as a complicated program, but for normal use, this rate of information exchange is perfectly satisfactory. Because it is just slightly faster than most of us can type.

If you can afford it, and your exchange can provide you with a suitable line, then I strongly advise you get a 300/1200 bits per second modem which will cater for most of your needs now and in the foreseeable future.

This type of modem is almost invariably hardwired into the telephone system.

Hardwiring is neither as complicated nor as difficult as it sounds. Think of it as a switched two way adapter fitted to your telephone socket. With the switch one way you can use the telephone in the normal manner. With the switch turned in the other direction your telephone line becomes a connector between your computer and the rest of the exciting world of computer communications.

This does not mean the acoustic coupler modem does not have a part to play in the general scheme of things.

Acoustic couplers have two major advantages.

One, they are cheap.

Two, they will fit on to almost any type of telephone handset. This series of articles was written partially on a pproperty in Molong in New South Wales, and transmitted by acoustic coupler to my computer in Sydney.

What equipment do you need?

Not an immense amount.

First of all, and quite obviously either a personal computer or a terminal. Terminals are almost invariably used in commercial applications and they are not for the enthusiast or the small business. Almost any personal computer will do although some, obviously, are better suited than others.

For example, it is perfectly feasible to use a computer without a disk drive to access bulleting boards - it is done every day of the week. But if you want to download programs and you only have a cassette recorder and limited memmory on yourmachine, you may find it a fairly long and laborous job which is hardly worth the effort.

Which brings us to memory. When you are talking communications it is fair to say you can never have too much memory.

The reason for this is simple. One of the joys of communicating with bulletin boards is the ability to be able to download programs for your machine. They are almost always free or available at a nominal charge - I'll talk about exceptions later - which are bargains difficult to beat. The speed you can download these programs is fixed in the first place by the modem you use. But the second control on speed is provided by the amount of memory you have available.

Mercenary II

Larger than life itself, *Mercenary* is back on the charts with the second offering. *Mercenary II, The Second City* kept the Reverend Gregory Beck occupied long enough to produce this month's mega-special on the game. Maps, tips & hints and a review. Stock up on coffee and read on.

I loved *Mercenary: Escape from Targ*, so imagine my hope for *Mercenary II: the Second City*. Andrew Farrell mailed me the cassette version of *Second City* back in the beginning of October, and I sat down to have some meaningful dialogue with Benson and the Palyars. The package said that I needed the same version of *Second City* as I had of *Escape from Targ*. I didn't have it!

Fortunately I went to Melbourne the next day *so I could exchange it, right? WRONG!!! "No* Second City available in Victoria", said Mid-town Toyworld (and they're the largest C-64 dealer in town). They said they would mail it, and since they didn't have a cassette version of *Escape*, I gave them the tape for the trade. I'm still waiting.

Seems that *Mercenary* with BOTH parts IS out on disk, but Second City isn't separate, yet. DO BE CAREFUL TO PURCHASE THE SAME FORMAT AS YOUR ORIGINAL. YOU NEED TO LOAD *ESCAPE FROM TARG* FIRST: *Second City* is a file.

A local small appliance dealer right here in Bairnsdale managed to lend me the compendium (both *Mercenary I & II.* Thank you, Porter's). I rushed home, announced the computer was mine for the next 12 hours and went to work. First of all it took me four minutes to get to *The Second City*. Load *Escape* (2.5 mins), watch the opening crash (1 min), then finally Benson allowed me to CTRL L, load the file '0'. That load took 30 seconds: total 4 minutes. There it was; a red landscape and Benson telling me I better buy the Dart: doesn't he know I only have 9000 credits? Wait a minute, I left Targ with well over a million, WHAT AM I DOING BACK ON TARG? I better load my saved *Escape* ending. (Don't bother to try it, the program crashes. Nor can you load *Escape* with your glorious ending, THEN the *Second City* file, it writes over your save: 9000 credits it is.)

I steal the Dart and proceed to 08-01 to greet the Palyars and see what their problem is this time. Don't bother, the wimps have exactly the same problem: might as well start to explore your surrounds. Hey, it's the same city I escaped from, buildings in slightly different places. In fact, all the objects are the same, save no gold but I do have this funny looking lampshade instead. Where is the triangular key that would get you quick, easy access everywhere in the game?

I won't ruin all the fun. What about those three orange rooms, it's bright in there. Is there anything in the two mazes? Other than these, the game plays the same, looks the same, Benson still has the same sense of humour (are you still alive? where are you?), etc. This isn't *Mercenary II*, more like *Mercenary 1.5*, if that.

Yes, I loved the original, and yes, I'm still playing *Second City* but to have to pay $79.95 for both or $39.95 for the 20 block (5k) *Second City*? You'd have to be a real enthusiast to do so.

All the situations are the same, same objects go to the normal rooms but you do have to find out where rooms and objects have been moved. Yes, take your metal detector and like in *Escape*, Benson's screen turns blue for Mechanoid (metal right?), green for Palyar or red for neutral buildings. You decide who you want to work for. I think the Palyars used a tractor beam to drag you back to the planet and stole your money.

Well the Palyars do give you a pass key, I wonder what the Mechanoids will give for destroyed Palyar installations? You could always get the pass, kindly anti-time bomb the wrecked Mechanoid installations, THEN destroy Palyar ones! There are a few tricky areas: 1) There are two very nasty, eternal mazes as yet unsolved.

2) The bright orange rooms have doors in them, practice walking around a room's perimeter with eyes closed. I should have it worked out shortly.

3) You will be teleported to a yellow room that only has one way teleports to get out. If you're making a map, it's easy to see that everything is now mirrored, do it again.

4) I also recommend that you use the elevator every time you are in a hanger to ascertain your position: two hangers (one light green, other is gray) have no elevator but they look EXACTLY like two other hangers and surrounding rooms. They aren't - never say, "been there, done that".

5) When you get to the first floating city (there are now two), if you leave the hanger via the no key door, ignore the room to the left for a while, going into it teleports you to another duplicate location but doesn't let you know it happened (the trapezoid door returns you, again without warning)!

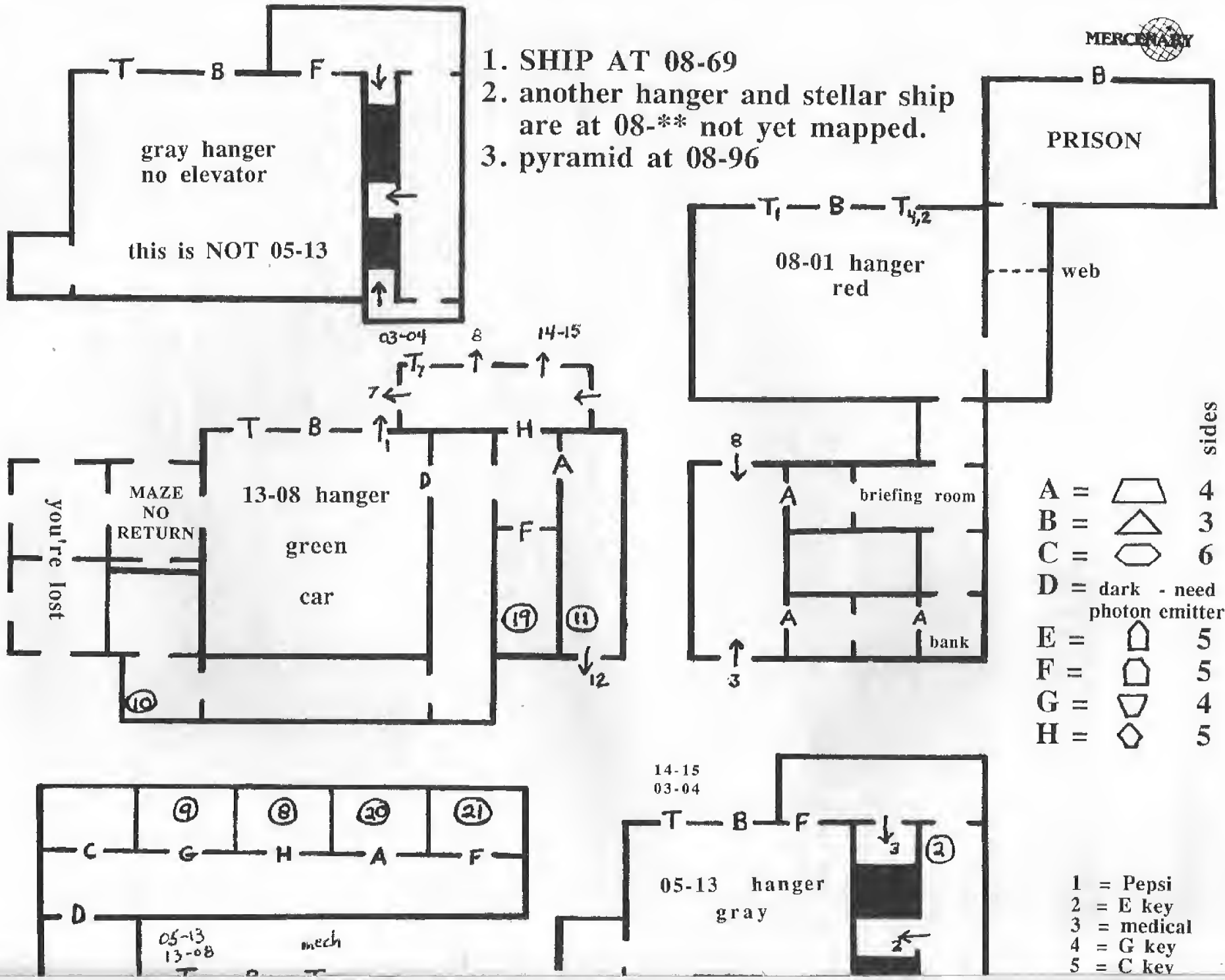
6) It's easy to overlook areas because of apparent duplication, if in doubt, drop an object. By the way, you'll need the triangular key to get out of the room that has the only item to get you to the second space station.

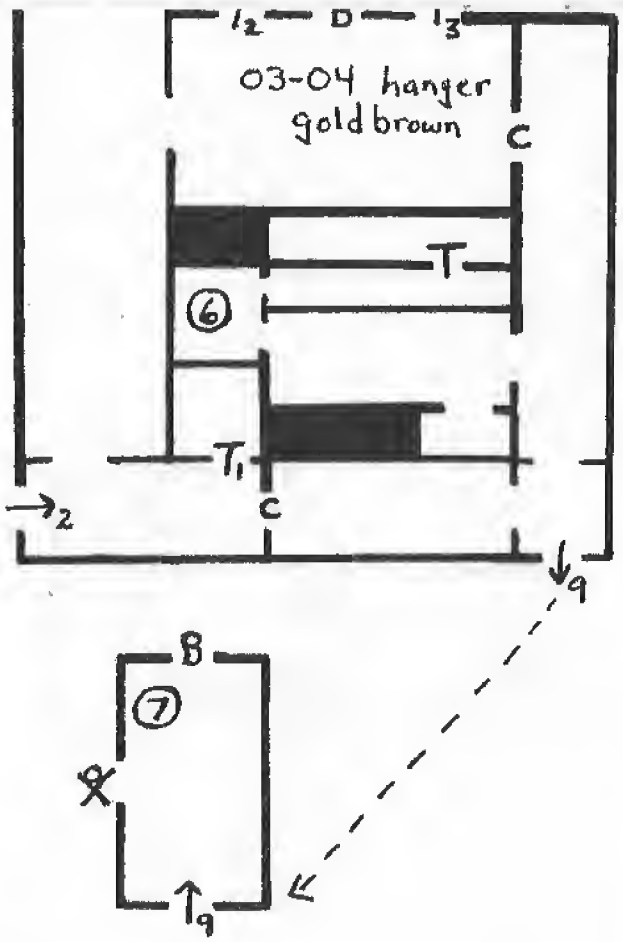
When all is said and done, it'll give me 14-20 hours of enjoyment. (*Escape* took me 12 escaping in three different ways). *Second City* is trickier and fun but grossly overpriced for a 5k add on which is so similar to the first one. Woakes could have done better, OR lowered the price. Paul, I want to take my money and experience with me if there's a *Mercenary III;* and, I prefer COKE to PEPSI. Good luck. Hint: 08-** and **-08

Comparison

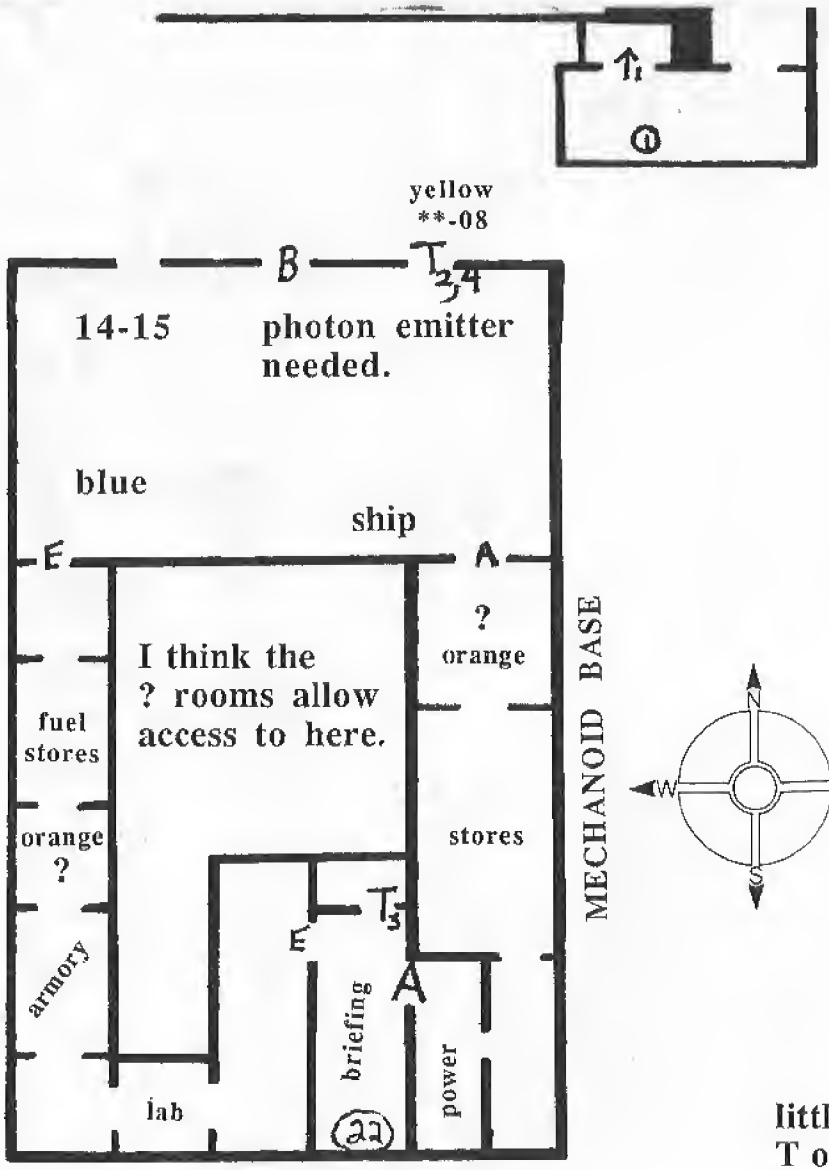
Presentation, sound, graphics, hookability, lastability are all the same.

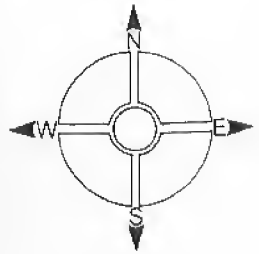
	Escape (Mercenary I)	Second City (Mercenary II)
Difficulty:	85	95
Value for $$$:	95	40
Originality:	95	35
Overall:	Loved it, great!	interesting but disappointing


1. SHIP AT 08-69
2. another hanger and stellar ship are at 08-** not yet mapped.
3. pyramid at 08-96
MERCENARY
T B F
gray hanger
no elevator
this is NOT 05-13
B
PRISON
T1 B T4,2
08-01 hanger
red
web
03-04
8
14-15
T7
7
T B 1 H
MAZE
NO
RETURN
you're lost
13-08 hanger
green
car
D
A
F
19
11
12
10
8
A
briefing room
A
A
bank
3
sides
A = 4
B = 3
C = 6
D = dark - need photon emitter
E = 5
F = 5
G = 4
H = 5
9
8
20
21
C G H A F
D
05-13
13-08
mech
14-15
03-04
T B F
3
2
05-13 hanger
gray
2
1 = Pepsi
2 = E key
3 = medical
4 = G key
5 = C key



Must have key B to leave. Perhaps leaving a car at 08-08 will save a walk.





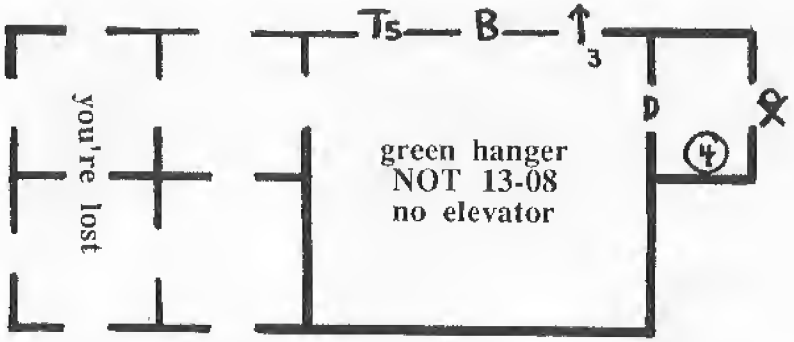
one way trans mat

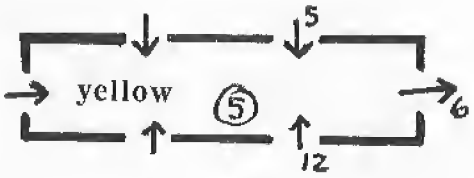
T two way transporter

little numbers next to a T or ⟶ means a good chance of going to the place having the same number.

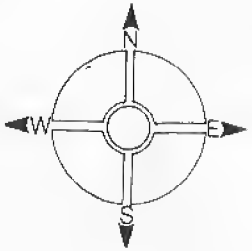
Pass key is the reward found at 08-01 after you destroy about 30 Mechanoid installations - drive with metal detector, Benson's screen turns blue if Mechanoid, green if Palyar, red if neutral

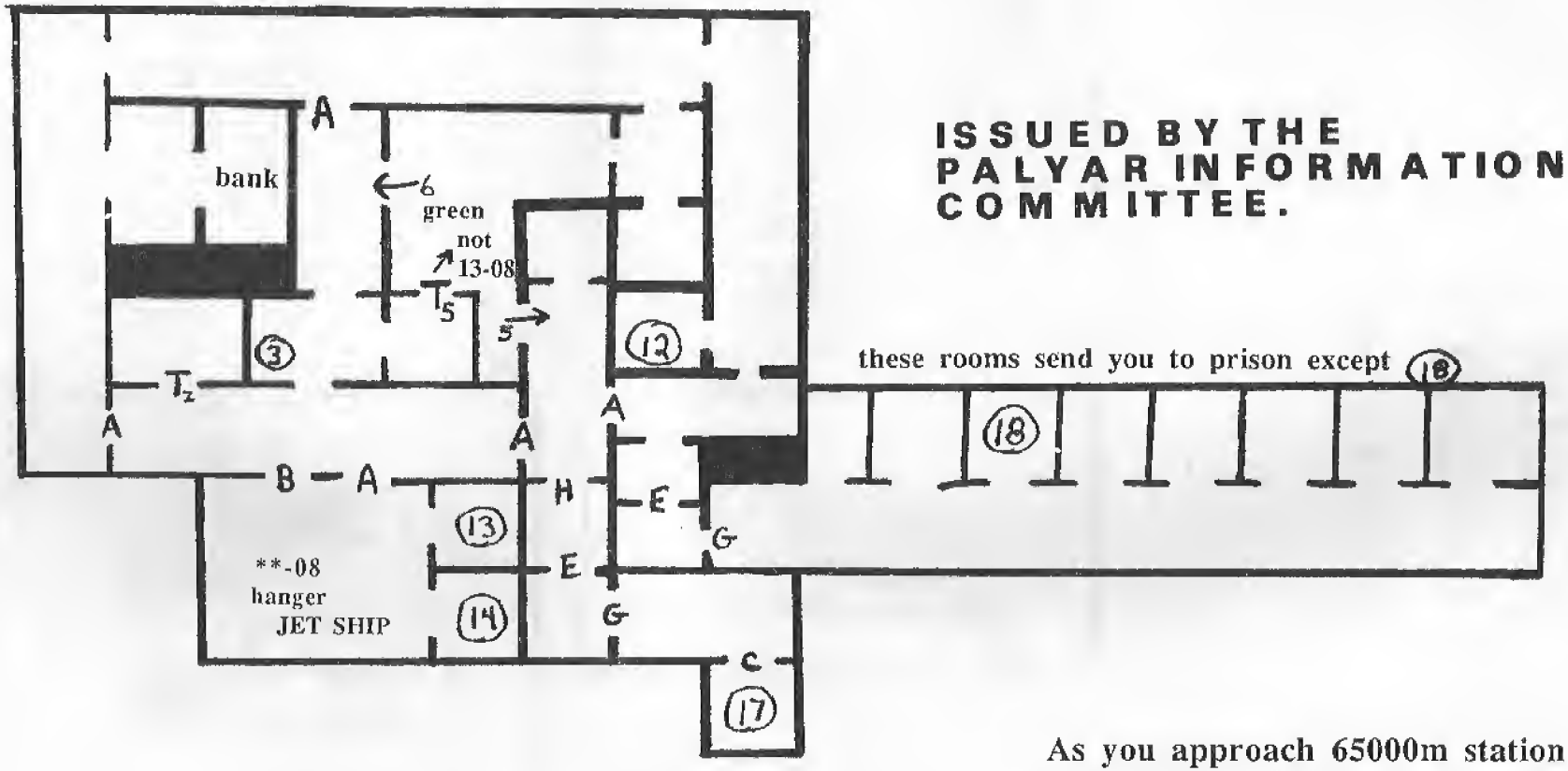
? -
6 =
7 = photon emit.
8 = anti time
9 = anti grav
10 = A key
11 = coffin
12 = energy crystal
13 = F key
14 = sights
15 = H key
16 = metal detect
17 = nova drive
18 = winchester
19 = power amp
20 = box
21 = guns
22 = mechanoid
23 = antenna
24 = cheese





MERCENARY





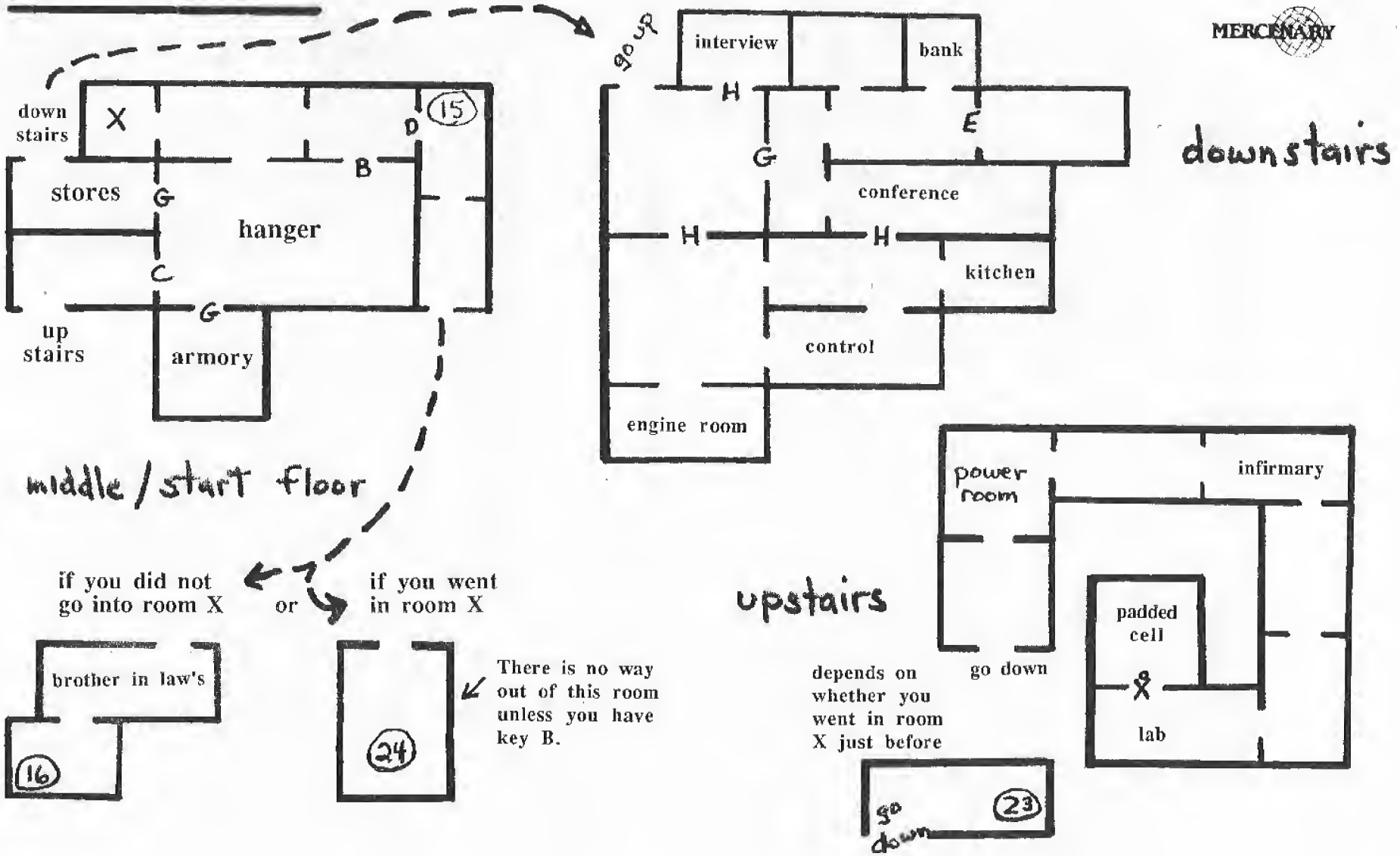
ISSUED BY THE PALYAR INFORMATION COMMITTEE.

As you approach 65000m station you will note 2 white dots which become 1 station. The coding is too good for this to be a mistake - I guess twin 65000 stations as

Room X = ? transport to twin space station?

the map indicates. I'm working on it now.

STATION 65000m



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Submissions should be addressed to the attention of Andrew Farrell, and may be either typed double spaced on plain sheets of paper, or on IBM, Commodore or Apple Macintosh format disks. Alternatively you may with prior arrangement transfer copy directly into our computers via modem.

Style should be non-technical unless you are covering a specifically technical subject - in which case any obscure terminology should be fully explained.

Humour may be included in controlled doses. Try to be entertaining as well as informative.

If you include maps or diagrams they should be clearly labelled, and drawn in a dark black felt tip pen about twice the size you intend them to be reproduced. Freehand sketches tend to look twice as bad when printed, so use a straight edge on all lines that should be straight.

Labels should stand clear of the actual drawing so that we may typeset them if required.

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